



# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM



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### EVENTS OF THE WEEK

SIR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN is due back in London this week-end, and is expected to resume work at the Foreign Office on Monday. His return, in good health, will be welcomed by members of all political parties. It is important that Sir Austen's colleagues should make him understand that the Anglo-French Compromise is dead; that it has been finally killed by British public opinion. Sir Austen is, no doubt, aware that the Compromise was rejected by the United States and Italy, and that various Ministers have indicated that it has therefore failed to achieve its purpose and has been dropped. But a general knowledge of these facts may not be enough to adjust his mind to the present situation. Sir Austen is an obstinate man, and he has not hitherto shown himself very susceptible to public opinion. It is probable that, being overseas, he has not yet caught the atmosphere of intense hostility in this country not only to the Compromise itself, but to the whole conception of an arrangement with France which either left America out of account or sought to put her in the wrong. It must not be forgotten that it was Sir Austen who initiated the Naval conversations with M. Briand, and announced the conclusion of the Compromise, before his illness. The danger is that he may still be in the mood to approach the disarmament problem from that angle.

Herr Stresemann's statement to the Reichstag on foreign affairs was in every way worthy of his reputation for statesmanship and moderation. He maintained firmly, but in temperate language, the German claim to

evacuation of the Rhineland without any political or financial bargaining. He defended equally firmly his policy of reconciliation with the Allied Powers. Referring to the Anglo-French Compromise, he emphasized the fact that no agreement between individual Governments could bind the Disarmament Commission as a whole, but accepted the assurances of the British Government as having "cut the ground" from beneath the misgivings arising from rumours of a secret military agreement between France and Great Britain. On the question of reparations, he emphasized the value of the work to be done by the Committee of experts, and the necessity of adjusting the burden imposed on Germany to her actual capacity to pay. His speech was very well received in the Reichstag, and has undoubtedly strengthened the Government's position, a motion of no confidence, introduced by the Fascists, being rejected by 219 votes to 98. Meanwhile, the Government has been relieved of a minor embarrassment by the safe passage of its cruiser appropriation.

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There seems to be real danger that the United States Senate may refuse to ratify the Kellogg Pact, or ratify it only with formal reservations. The first trial of strength will come on the question of priority for the Fifteen Cruiser Bill. President Coolidge—whose Armistice Day speech, it is now stated, was not, as reported, read in draft by Mr. Hoover—desires priority for the Cruiser Bill; Senator Borah and the representatives of the Churches and peace societies desire priority to be given to the Pact. The fight is likely to be a hard one, and it is strongly suggested that any new

proposals for limitation coming from Great Britain—of which there are rumours—should be postponed until it is over, as they would be regarded in the States as an attempt to torpedo the cruiser programme. American opinion, at the moment, is strongly swayed by two contending forces—the desire to take the lead in achieving world peace, and a deep distrust of European statesmanship. M. Poincaré's unbending attitude on the Rhineland and Reparations, and the bitter attacks of the French Press on Herr Stresemann's speech, will not do anything to weaken the latter tendency.

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Mr. Neville Chamberlain, in receiving the deputation from the local authorities last week in regard to the housing subsidy, refrained, as was to be expected, from declaring his intentions on the matter. But his demeanour has served to strengthen the impression that a further reduction of the subsidy is seriously contemplated. He laid great stress on the contention that last year's reduction of the subsidy had led to a fall in building costs. But as building costs have fallen similarly in other countries this is a clear case of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, subject only to the possibility that the reduction of the subsidy may have tended to lower prices by diminishing the number of houses built. A further reduction of the subsidy could only affect a further lowering of prices by the same *modus operandi*, i.e., through a further cutting down of housing programmes. In the present state of affairs, as we argued last week, such a policy would be outrageous. It appears that the representatives of the local authorities pressed strongly on Mr. Chamberlain the view that the time has now come when the subsidy ought rather to be increased. There is little doubt that they are right.

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The Bill to extend by £10 millions the borrowing powers of the Unemployment Insurance Fund has secured its second reading in the House of Commons without a division, a result which accurately represents the fact that all parties would be equally reluctant at this juncture to propose either a decrease in benefits or an increase in the contributions of any of the three parties to the scheme. Moreover, since there is some ground for hoping that the aggregate unemployment figures, allowing for the usual seasonal fluctuations, will now begin to fall (since the displacement of miners must by now be nearly complete), the course adopted is probably the most sensible course in the circumstances. The chief interest in the debate lay in the attempt to extract from the Government a promise to suspend the operation of the "thirty contributions" rule, which is due to operate next spring, and which would debar from benefit those who have been unemployed for a long period. The Government spokesmen refused to commit themselves on the matter, though it is clear enough that they will never dare to let the "thirty contributions" rule come into force on the eve of a General Election. The most constructive speech in the debate was delivered by Captain Macmillan, one of the "Y.M.C.A." school of Tories, who urged that "the permanent unemployed should not be carried on this fund at all," nor thrown upon the poor law, but maintained under a separate scheme financed entirely by the State.

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The House of Commons was the scene, on Tuesday, of a domestic quarrel within the ranks of the Labour Party. Mr. Samuel, the Financial Secretary, had put forward the perfectly reasonable proposition that members of the Diplomatic Service should be brought under the operation of the Superannuation Acts and thus become eligible for ordinary Civil Service pensions.

The change is rendered necessary by the amalgamation in 1919 of the Foreign Office Service and the Diplomatic Service. All officers appointed to the joint service since that date are legally members of the Diplomatic Service, and for that reason can only qualify for pensions by service abroad. This is hard luck for those who serve at home, and there is really nothing to be said against the Government's proposal to bring them all under the ordinary Civil Service scheme. Various members of the Labour Party, however, seized the opportunity for a general attack on the remuneration of Civil Servants. Mr. Barker, of Abertillery, remarked, for instance, that when a comparison was made between the pensions paid to those included in the Estimate and those paid to the workers after sixty years of labour, the thing became outrageously and monstrosously unjust; and Mr. Jack Jones added that the ordinary workman's son did not stand a "cat-in-hell's chance" of getting one of the higher positions in the Foreign Service.

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Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Thomas showed considerable courage in withstanding the fury of their followers. Mr. MacDonald urged that the State service must be very well paid if they were going to obtain and retain the people whom they wanted for that service. Mr. Thomas pleaded for equality of treatment between different branches of the Civil Service. Mr. Maxton, however, supported the opposition, which came, of course, exclusively from the Labour Benches. Episodes of this kind lend colour to Mr. Churchill's contention that Labour is "unfit to govern." We have seen that Labour in Office is less irresponsible than Labour in opposition, but this unwillingness to sanction unequal pay for unequal work is a constant source of weakness in the Labour movement itself, and it would be disastrous if its influence spread to the State services. For the advocates of Socialism to begrudge the Civil Servant's pension seems sheer madness.

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The question of the Washington Eight Hours Convention, which still remains unratified by Great Britain, was raised by Lord Lytton in the House of Lords on Tuesday. Lord Lytton asked: (1) That the Government should inform the I.L.O. of the precise points on which they desire a revision of the Convention; and (2) that the Government should publish the text of a draft Bill showing what modifications, if any, in the existing industrial agreements in this country would be required as the result of the ratification of an International Eight Hours Convention in the amended form desired by the Government. Lord Salisbury replied that to lay down beforehand the exact points of revision which they would like to insist upon would not facilitate but would hamper negotiations, which were more likely to be successful if they were approached with greater delicacy of touch. In view of the repeated statements by Ministers of their intention of ratifying the Convention, and the obstructive effects of their failure either to do so or to indicate their objections, this answer is singularly weak, so weak indeed that "delicacy of touch" seems an inadequate term by which to describe it.

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At the end of last week, Sir Chartres Biron delivered, at Bow Street, his considered judgment regarding Miss Radclyffe Hall's novel "The Well of Loneliness." Copies of the book had been seized by the police, and the publishers, Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., and the Pegasus Press of Paris, were summoned to show cause why they should not be destroyed on the ground that the book was obscene. Sir Chartres de-

clared that he had no hesitation in saying that the book was "an obscene libel," and that it would tend to corrupt those into whose hands it should fall. He made an order for the seized copies to be destroyed, and for the payment of twenty guineas costs in each case. We understand that an appeal is pending, and we therefore refrain, at present, from any comment on the case.

\* \* \*

The United States Government, which has always shown great sensitiveness about accidents at sea, in which American lives are lost, has instituted an inquiry into the tragedy of the "Vestris." It will be remembered that, when the "Titanic" foundered, a special commission of inquiry was convened. It did not prove itself a particularly competent tribunal—the Senator in charge spent a great deal of time in inquiring whether the passengers took refuge in the watertight compartments—and many of the questions asked by Mr. Tuttle, the United States District Attorney, in the present case, are more indicative of a zeal for truth than of ability to discover it. The case is one for a competent technical tribunal, and whatever the findings of the Federal Commissioner may be, it will be wise to suspend final judgment pending the holding of the searching inquiry which the Board of Trade has very properly undertaken to hold.

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A more serious issue is raised by the Federal Commissioner's statement that, if the evidence showed criminal negligence on the part of any persons, he would have to hold those persons for action by a Grand Jury. The American authorities may have the right to subpœna foreigners on American soil and to inquire into occurrences affecting American interests, and it was proper that the British Government should raise no objections to their action; but they have no jurisdiction over officers of the British merchant service who are performing their duties on the high seas, under the British flag. When a ship is outside a foreign country's territorial waters, all that is done aboard her is done within the limits of her own country's sovereignty. The owners, officers, and crew of the "Vestris" are amenable to British, not to American law; they must be cleared or condemned by a British, not an American, tribunal.

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A decision of considerable importance to daily newspapers was given by the High Court on Wednesday. The proprietors of the SHEFFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH appealed against a conviction of publishing a coupon of a ready-money football betting business contrary to the Ready Money Football Betting Act, 1920. A calculation laid before the Justices showed that in the competition in question it would be necessary to send in 282,429,536,481 coupons before the sender could be sure that he had included a coupon giving the twenty-four correct results entitling him to the prize. On this calculation of probabilities, the Justices found that winning the prize by forecasting was mainly a matter of chance. The High Court took the same view, and the appeal was dismissed. Immediately this decision was known, the London newspapers which have been running football competitions decided to make an end of the practice. One powerful weapon is thus laid aside in the fierce competition for circulation between the daily newspapers. In so far as they are thrown back upon the provision of a more efficient and accurate news-service, the public will benefit by the ruling of the High Court; but there are a number of other expedients still unfortunately available by which newspapers may be sold to people who have no desire for information on public events.

Mr. Bruce has been victorious at the Australian polls. His majority, though somewhat reduced, is still substantial; he will probably have a majority of about thirteen in a House of Representatives with seventy-five members. His recent policy has therefore been endorsed by a majority of the electors; but the Labour gains, which Mr. Bruce attributes solely to the swing of the pendulum, may be at least partly due to his strike legislation. In Victoria, Mr. Hogan, the Labour Premier, has been defeated on a vote of censure, and a dissolution is expected. Mr. Hogan lost some votes on questions relating to redistribution of seats but the main charge against him was of failing to provide sufficient police protection when the waterside troubles were at their worst. All this shows how deeply the recent troubles have stirred the country, and so long as Mr. Bruce's Transport Workers Act remains on the Statute Book, these troubles and their Parliamentary repercussions will certainly continue.

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The Nettuno Conventions have been ratified, and the way is now open for a renewal of the Italo-Yugoslav peace pact; but the internal condition of Yugoslavia remains unsettled and dangerous. Father Koroshetz, the new Premier, has hitherto restrained his followers from fulfilling their threats against the Croats; but the coalition, which is itself torn by fierce dissensions, has done nothing to heal the breach and is quite incapable of doing so. The Nettuno Conventions themselves appear to have been ratified very largely because they exasperated the Croats rather than because the Government deputies had any particular liking for them. The Magyars and Germans are strongly opposed to the Government's Schools Bill, and the four German deputies have threatened to withdraw, like the Croats, from the Skupshtina, if the cultural rights of minorities are not respected. This is a dangerous position. If a weak, divided Government gave any guarantee that no active measures would be taken against the Croats, its weakness would be a blessing in disguise; but the most reliable reports suggest that a more likely outcome is the fall of the Koroshetz Government in the near future, and its replacement by a Cabinet of sterner temper.

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The improvement in Roumanian conditions, exemplified in the peaceful replacement of the Bratianu regime by a National Peasant Government, affords a striking contrast to the discord in Yugoslavia. Dr. Maniu, the new Premier, has already given proof of his intentions to solve Roumania's problem on constitutional lines. Martial law has been abolished except in the ten-kilometre frontier zone. The censorship has been entirely removed, and for the first time in ten years, the Roumanian Press is free.

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Following upon the article on Winter Sports which we published last week, we have been asked by the officers of the Cambridge University Liberal Club to draw attention to a travel scheme which is being organized by that body, under the auspices of the Union of University Liberal Societies. The scheme in question is one by which people going out to Winter Sports in Switzerland may eliminate the fees taken by private travel agencies and at the same time help to provide working boys and girls with free holidays. The clerical work is being done by a voluntary staff, and the Workers' Travel Association is giving gratuitous assistance. There being thus no overhead charges, prices can be kept well below the usual level. Anyone interested in this project should apply at once for particulars of this year's programme to the Tours Secretary (J. Salomon), Trinity Hall, Cambridge.



## THE ISSUES OF THE DE-RATING SCHEME

**I**T is not an easy thing to discuss the Government's de-rating and poor-law proposals in an orderly and systematic way. The trouble is not merely that the various Bills in which the scheme is embodied are full of highly complex technicalities. That is true of many Bills, and is not necessarily inconsistent with a fairly intelligent appreciation of their main provisions and the main issues which they raise. The real trouble about the concoction which is to occupy the remainder of the present Parliament is that there are no main features, or at any rate no main issues. There are a vast number of issues of very different kinds, each of such considerable importance that it is not easy to know which deserves pride of place. Should one concentrate on the de-rating of productive industry, on the anomalies of the notorious "formula," on the abolition of percentage grants for the health services, on the abolition of the Boards of Guardians, on the subordination of the smaller towns to the County Councils? It is impossible to see a homogeneous wood in this motley of variegated trees. We publish this week three articles dealing with different aspects of the new proposals; yet between them they cover only a small fraction of the ground. Never was there a measure which exposed so large a surface to valid criticism. It may possibly be helpful to some readers who have no idea how to find their way about the jungle, if we attempt, after the manner of the text-books, something like a formal classification of the more important issues raised by the plan.

**I. The De-rating of Productive Industry.** Under this head there is no issue, or none at least so far as we are concerned, as to the desirability of relieving the burden of rates, even at the cost of higher burdens on the taxpayer. We agree entirely with Mr. Churchill that, pound for pound, local rates are far more pernicious and inequitable than taxes; and we wish that he could have grasped this truth at that earlier phase of his career as Chancellor when, in the name of economy, he was relieving the Exchequer at the expense of the localities. But the plan of relief which Mr. Churchill has adopted raises a very serious issue. It discriminates between "productive" industry, agriculture, and the railways on the one hand, and householders, shopkeepers, trading establishments, every other class of ratepayer on the other. It relieves the former of three-quarters or the whole of their rates; it gives no relief to the latter (unless they happen to be beneficiaries under the formula).

This discrimination is, in our view, too arbitrary and anomalous to be defensible as a permanent scheme of reform. If it were put forward as a temporary, emergency relief, to bring immediate succour to our depressed industries, while more satisfactory permanent arrangements were being matured, it might be possible to view it differently. It might be possible in that case to pass lightly over the fact that the scheme discriminates in favour of brewers and distillers as against householders, traders, and electricity undertakings. But how can such anomalies be defended as the basis of a permanent measure, so permanent that it will not begin to operate until a year from now? The Liberal

"Yellow Book" defines what is undoubtedly the right approach to the problem—not to discriminate between one class of ratepayer and another, but to relieve ratepayers as a whole by transferring services, such as the main roads and the relief of the able-bodied, altogether to the State, and by increasing grants-in-aid. The issue here is in the formal sense a dispute only about method; but it is one of those cases where the choice of method is a matter of the first importance.

**II. The Abolition of Percentage Grants for the Health Services.** Mrs. E. D. Simon deals with this proposal in the article which follows. It is the most definitely reactionary feature of the Government's scheme. It is calculated and, we think it is fair to say, designed to check the development of the health services. It is mixed up with the de-rating and other proposals, with which it has no sort of logical connection, because there would be no chance of getting it through if it were put forward by itself.

**III. The Pool and the Formula.** Under this head there are several distinct points of controversy, and a few words of preliminary explanation may be desirable. By the de-rating of industry, and the discontinuance of the percentage grants, the local authorities are deprived of a large part of their existing revenue (£24 millions under the first head and £16 millions under the second). The idea of the Government's scheme is to make this loss good, and more than make it good, taking the country as a whole, by a new block grant; and for this purpose the Exchequer is to provide £45 millions (or £5 millions more than the local authorities will lose). But this sum is to be distributed among the various local authorities on a plan which takes no direct account of the revenue which they lose. It is to be distributed among the various Counties and County Boroughs in accordance with the famous "formula"—the formula of "weighted population." But that is not the end of the story. There remains the question of how the grant due to a County is to be distributed among the various local authorities within it, among, that is to say, the non-county Borough Councils, the Urban District Councils, the Rural District Councils, and the County Council itself. For this purpose a different criterion is adopted, the simple criterion of unweighted population.

Thus there are three distinct issues which arise under this main heading:—

- (a) The size of the total Exchequer contribution;
- (b) the formula for distributing the money among the Counties and County Boroughs;
- (c) the apportionment within each County.

Under each of these heads the Government's scheme has met with strong criticisms from the representative organizations of the local authorities. As regards (a), they maintain that the margin of £5 millions is inadequate to do what the Government claim, namely, to allow for the normal tendency of the discontinued grants to grow year by year, and also to provide special relief for the general ratepayer in the distressed areas. Another point in this connection should not be overlooked. Of the £5 millions margin, £3 millions is to be charged upon the Road Fund, which is thus, in effect, to be raided again.

As regards (b), the arbitrariness of the formula's results has become notorious. The centres of the "heavy" industries, the coal and iron and steel



districts, derive the greatest benefit from it—which is right. But the places which do next best are the seaside resorts, the cathedral cities, and the wealthy residential counties. The places which come out easily the worst are the textile districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. It is all very well to say that the more prosperous areas must be prepared to shoulder heavier burdens in order to relieve the less prosperous. But this is not what the formula achieves. Why should Lancashire be mulcted for the benefit of Surrey? Why should Brighton gain at the expense of Bradford?

These results are so anomalous that many people cannot believe that they are true. No sane Government, they feel, would embark on so ludicrous a plan of redistributing local burdens. But it is easy to see how the absurdities have arisen. The trouble is that the formula takes no direct account of the loss of revenue under de-rating; and this means that, other things being equal, the more industry a locality possesses, the worse it fares. Of course, other things are not equal; the formula is so devised as to benefit districts which have high birth-rates and which had heavy unemployment in the "standard year." That is why it works out all right in the case of the coal and iron and steel centres. But in the textile districts the birth-rates are comparatively low, unemployment was not so heavy a year ago as it is now, and the loss of revenue under de-rating is very large. Hence they suffer.

The arbitrariness of the redistribution is greatly increased by (c). Within a county, the districts often differ widely in the extent to which they are industrialized and thus lose revenue under the de-rating proposal. But the criterion by which the county grant is to be distributed not only takes no direct account of this loss of revenue, it does not, like the "formula," take even indirect account of it. There is no allowance here for birth-rates or unemployment. The criterion is the simple one of population; so that the inevitable result is that residential areas will fare better than industrial areas. Within London, for example, Stepney comes out worse than Westminster. The Urban District Councils' Association has protested strongly on this matter. They have asked why the criterion of simple population is applied within the county, when it is recognized to be unfair as between counties! So far as we know, they have received no answer, and, so far as we can see, none is possible.

IV. The Proposed Changes in Local Government. These changes, which have no sort of real connection with the remainder of the scheme, raise a series of entirely different issues.

(a) Should the Boards of Guardians be abolished?

There is a progressive tradition in favour of this step; but its practical wisdom is, none the less, open to doubt. Miss Rathbone's article calls attention to an important aspect of this question. The Boards of Guardians enlist the services of many people, particularly women, for whom there would otherwise be no place in public life.

(b) If the Guardians are to be abolished, should their functions be transferred to the County Councils?

We dealt with this question at some length a fortnight ago. It seems to us utterly perverse to place the control of poor-relief in important non-county boroughs like Cambridge in the hands of the County Council. This leads on to a more general issue.

(c) The tendency of the scheme to subordinate the borough and the smaller local authorities generally to the County Councils.

Opposition to this feature of the scheme is especially vehement in Scotland; and we publish an article

from Mr. Henderson Stewart describing the Scottish attitude. But the bias in favour of the counties is not confined to the Scottish scheme, and it seems to us altogether misguided. A town is a real entity, with a corporate spirit; the counties are not real entities. To make the county the effective unit of local government is to lose much of the advantage of local institutions, namely, intimate knowledge and the personal touch, without going far enough to secure the advantages of centralization.

## PERCENTAGE v. BLOCK GRANTS

By MRS. E. D. SIMON.

THE controversial features of the Government's proposals are so many, that the abolition of the percentage grants hitherto paid for certain public health services has not so far aroused the attention it deserves. That the opposition to this proposal will be formidable, as soon as its effect is understood, cannot be doubted. Whatever the Government may hope, the people of this country are not prepared to slow down the present rate of progress in dealing with Maternity and Child Welfare, the treatment of Tuberculosis, Venereal Diseases, Mental Deficiency, or the Welfare of the Blind, and the alternative under the Government's proposals to calling a halt will be that most of the extra cost will fall upon the ordinary ratepayers—householders and shopkeepers—because industry is relieved of three-quarters of its rates.

Percentage Grants—namely, the system under which the State pays 50 per cent., and in some cases 75 per cent., of the approved expenditure of local authorities on certain services—are in force for Education and Police as well as for the services affected by the Government's proposals. The system was applied to Education after other methods of grant had been tried and found wanting, and it is true to say that this method alone has stood the test of financing any developing national service, without throwing an unduly heavy burden upon the ratepayer.

The case of the Poor Law is an outstanding example of the opposite method, i.e., an increasing expenditure with fixed Government grants. In the return just published by the Ministry of Health it is shown that whereas in 1901 Government grants amounted to 25 per cent. of the expenditure from the rates on this service, in 1927 they amounted to only 7 per cent. It is true that under the Government's Bill the grant is to be revised every five years, but the decline in the ratio between grants and expenditure from the rates will still occur if the public health services develop as they should. The Solicitor-General, Sir Boyd Merriman, speaking at St. Helens on October 5th, said: "After each five-yearly period had begun it followed that increased expenditure would fall on the ratepayers and not on the Government." It must always be remembered that the increase in the expenditure of local authorities is largely caused by the action of Parliament. Mr. Chamberlain, in a recent interview with local authorities, said that it was out of the question that fresh commitments would be imposed by Parliament without a special grant, but in 1907 Education authorities were forced to provide medical inspection of school children. No grant, however, was given towards the additional cost until 1912.

Of all the services affected by the proposed change, Maternity and Child Welfare is pre-eminently the one in which continuous development is essential. The infant death-rate, already much reduced by its operation, is still 70 per 1,000 births, and the maternal mortality figure has been stationary at 3,000 for the last twenty years. Ante-

natal care is in its infancy even in the most progressive authorities, and little has yet been done to tackle the problem of the health of the pre-school child. Twenty-five per cent. of the entrants to the schools are found to have some physical defect, and yet no one doubts that by a wise expenditure of money this problem could be tackled as successfully as that of the infant death-rate. During the last three years the grants from the Government for Maternity and Child Welfare have increased by 15 per cent. If a stereotyped block grant had been in existence the rate-payers would have had to find £142,336 extra for this service alone, or, which is more likely, the rate of increase would have been much slower, if indeed, any increase at all had taken place.

A great advantage of the percentage grant over the fixed grant is that sympathetically administered it affords the best instrument yet devised for Government control and stimulus without undue interference with local freedom and initiative. It may be remarked in passing that the Ministry of Health has something to learn from the Board of Education in this respect, but the administration of the grant with regard to Education shows that the charge of "undue interference" can seldom be substantiated. The Government department concerned has to examine and approve all proposals for expenditure; this should dispose of the charge, sometimes made even by responsible Ministers, of extravagance on the part of the local authorities, and of the ridiculous statement that under the percentage grant the Government has to pay what "local authorities choose to spend." Even when the expenditure is approved by the Government, local authorities have to find half the cost, a point which is sometimes overlooked by those who speak as if, under the percentage grant, local authorities are given large sums of the taxpayers' money to dispose of in an utterly irresponsible manner. But it is with laggard authorities that the inducement of a grant of half the expenditure incurred is of the greatest value. It is by this means that a minimum standard has gradually been evolved for the care of the mothers and babies throughout the country, and at the same time progressive authorities have been encouraged to go still further ahead. Under the new proposals the Ministry will only have the power to withhold part of the grant if a reasonable average standard of public health services is not achieved and maintained. It is feared that this power will only be used in the case of exceptionally recalcitrant authorities, for a further condition of withholding grant has to be that "the health of all or some of the inhabitants has been or is likely to be endangered" by the low standard. At the best this clause can only hope to raise some authorities to the minimum, and there will be no inducement under a fixed grant, as there is under a percentage grant, for authorities to advance beyond the minimum.

What are the arguments that are urged against percentage grants? There are two main ones: (1) that they lead to extravagance, and (2) that the Government grant is thereby based on expenditure and not on needs.

It is safe to say that there is no evidence to support the charge of extravagance. If a comparison is made of the grant-aided local services with the non-grant-aided for the five-yearly period 1919 to 1924 it is seen that the largest increases have taken place in the expenditure on Parks and Open Spaces, 54 per cent., Public Libraries and Art Galleries, 49 per cent., which receive no grants. This result is not surprising when one remembers that all grant-aided expenditure has to be carefully scrutinized by the Government department concerned. The argument that under the percentage grant the rich authority gains more than the poor one, and that under the Government's proposals the

money will be "distributed according to needs," merits careful consideration. In the first place, a progressive authority is not necessarily a rich one, nor a laggard authority a poor one. Bradford, with rates of 18s. 10d., spent £18,797 from the rates on Maternity and Child Welfare, whereas Newcastle, with rates of 13s. 3d., spent only £6,578. Is it not fair that Bradford should receive more from Government grants for this service than Newcastle? The "needs" as measured by the amount and type of population and ability to pay are the same in both these towns, and yet they are dealt with in a different manner by their local councils. "Distribution" of grants according to "needs" does not carry any guarantee of "expenditure" according to needs. Again, an allocation which still leaves Merthyr Tydvil with a rate of 22s. 5d. and East Ham with a rate of 21s. 10d.—to quote only two of the necessitous areas—but which results in a gain to Brighton, Canterbury, Southport, Southend, of amounts varying between 5d. and 1s. can hardly be justified as distribution according to needs. The fact is that the formula, for all its ingenuity, does not survive the most important test.

If the Government is convinced that block grants are better than percentage grants, why do they not apply the principle all round? Education accounts for a much greater expenditure from Government grants than do the public health services. The reason would appear to lie in the complete defeat by local education authorities of the attempt by Lord Eustace Percy to introduce block grants for this service three years ago. It was made clear then that this country would not tolerate such a blow to educational development. Is it conceivable that the country cares less for saving the lives of mothers and babies, for checking the ravages of tuberculosis and venereal diseases, for caring for the mentally defective or the blind, than it does for education? The challenge has been thrown down by the Government. Let the reply be an overwhelming demand that the public health services, in common with education and the police, be left outside the scope of the Bill.

## WOMEN AND THE GUARDIANS

By ELEANOR RATHBONE.

MR. SIDNEY WEBB once remarked that the usual time-lag of a reform in this country was about nineteen years. It has taken just about that long to bring the "break-up of the Poor Law," for which he and Mrs. Webb waged so vigorous a campaign, to the stage of being incorporated in a Government measure. As so often happens, it is a Conservative Government that has rummaged out, recut and refashioned the laid-aside vesture till it shows little traces of the original web. The arguments by which it is being recommended for the country's wear are at least typically the Government's own. Their proposals with regard to the Poor Law are put forward frankly on financial grounds, as an indispensable part of the policy of "mitigating the existing inequalities of rate burden," and incidentally of promoting better classification and hence economies in institutional relief. Their effects on efficiency of administration and on the well-being of the recipients of poor relief are scarcely referred to.

For the transfer of the functions of Boards of Guardians to County authorities a strong case, even on administrative grounds, can undoubtedly be made out. But it is not my purpose here to discuss that case at large; merely to point out certain disadvantages incidental to the change which cannot be denied, though they may be overlooked or belittled.



The Boards of Guardians, of course, are protesting vigorously against their own abolition. But these being inconspicuous and dingy bodies, superior people naturally attribute their protests to self-importance and desire to magnify their office. Doubtless such motives play their part. But among the Guardians are many whose concern is genuinely less with their own exclusion from exacting duties which bring them neither fame nor praise, than with anxiety as to how those duties are going to be performed in future. Certainly they have cause for anxiety. Mr. Neville Chamberlain has repeatedly expressed a pious hope that the services of the best of the guardians will be retained within the new order. He extends this hope to the women guardians—as well he may. The verdict pronounced by the 1909 Poor Law Commission (Majority and Minority alike) upon Boards of Guardians was on the whole unflattering. But both Reports singled out the work of women guardians for special praise, as indeed often the bright spot on the darkest patches of Bumbledom. Even the most obdurate anti-feminists have not denied the special aptitude of women for the kind of meticulous case work and of sympathetic yet critical supervision of institutional management of which a large proportion of Poor Law administration is made up.

When then, precisely, is the arithmetical basis of Mr. Chamberlain's pious hope that the services of those who have shown themselves real "guardians of the poor" will be retained? There are roughly 20,000 Guardians, of whom roughly 2,500 are women. Theoretically all these are free to offer themselves when the time comes for election to the County or County Borough Council of their respective areas and to serve if successful on its Public Assistance Committee. But obviously only a tiny fraction can be successful. The Councils have already their full quota of members, most of whom secure triennial re-election with or without a contest. Council elections are contested more hotly, on more strictly political lines, and more expensively than Guardians' elections. County Councils offer special difficulties. Their one-member areas decrease the likelihood of a woman being elected as sole representative. Further, service on them is specially exacting owing to the necessity of travelling long distances to the place of meeting and to visit widely scattered institutions; so that the possession of abundant leisure or a motor-car becomes almost essential. Many of the most effective women guardians are of the class that keeps one servant or no servant. The chances on County Borough Councils are slightly better, partly because of the concentration of work within a smaller area; partly because there are three Councillors to each ward, one of whom each year must face re-election.

The success of women in overcoming this double difficulty of election and of service is measured by the fact that last year there were only 130 women serving on all the County Councils of England and Wales, of whom twenty-three were on the L.C.C. Seventeen County Councils were without a single woman member. On all the County Borough Councils of England and Wales there were only 168 elected women.

There remains the chance of service through co-option or nomination. The Bill provides that a Council may (not must) provide for the inclusion on its Public Assistance Committee of a non-elected element, appointed by itself, and not exceeding one-third of the Committee's total membership. Such non-elected members, if they exist at all, must include women. In the case of a County, the scheme must also provide for local "Guardians Committees" with a non-elected element not exceeding one-third of the membership and including men and women. A County Borough may (not must) appoint "Guardians sub-committees" of

its Public Assistance Committee and may (not must) include on these a minority of non-elected members, men and women. It follows that it will be perfectly possible for a County Borough authority taking over the new functions to include not a single ex-Guardian, and not a single woman. It would be possible for a County authority to meet the requirements of the Act by including two men and two women on each of its Guardians committees. Local authorities have long had rights of co-option to a good many of their Standing Committees, but except when compelled to do so (e.g., in the case of Education and Maternity and Child Welfare Committees, where the matter is compulsory) they have seldom exercised these rights.

It may be said that the displacement of existing Guardians, though in some cases unfortunate, is a temporary disadvantage. But what of the fitness of the new authorities, as now constituted, to perform their new functions? Lack of experience is soon remedied, though costly while it lasts. But it is less easy to extend the hours of a Councillor's working day. In one large City Council the sensible rule exists that each member must serve on neither more nor less than two Standing Committees. When the duties of the School Board were added to the functions of the Council it was agreed to regard these as an *hors d'œuvre* or extra. But the Education Committee being one of the heaviest of the Council, it follows that the appetite of its members is more or less satiated when they have partaken of the *hors d'œuvre*, and they have little to spare for other standing dishes. This tendency to indigestion will be considerably intensified by the addition to their duties of the functions of the Poor Law Guardians. No wonder that the Chairman of the L.C.C., noting that the amount spent on out-relief in London in 1926 exceeded £3,000,000, and that the Metropolitan Guardians and Asylums Board administered 200 institutions containing over 100,000 beds, was haunted by a vision of his County Council not only being swamped with work to which they had not been accustomed, but with work which would alter the centre of gravity of the duties of that body.

The prospect will not daunt those who hold the view that the less the elected representatives of the people meddle with real problems of administration the better; that the said representatives are useful as window dressing, but should leave the real work to the experts, i.e., the paid officials. But to those who value democratic institutions as a reality, the prospect is perturbing.

Assuming that the change in its main features is inevitable, how can the above disadvantages be mitigated? There are several possibilities which may be summarized shortly:—

1. The size of the Councils might be increased by, say, one-fourth, with or without the stipulation that the first election of new members should be confined to ex-Guardians.
  2. The electoral areas of the County Councils might be enlarged, each returning three members as in Boroughs.
  3. Elections might be by Proportional Representation. (The above two changes would increase the probability of the election of women and others with specialized experience.)
  4. Councils might be required, not permitted, to include one-third of non-elected members on their Public Assistance Committee and on their Guardians Committees and sub-Committees.
  5. Some of the nominated members might be appointed by the Ministry of Health instead of by the Local Authority.
- Those concerned to defend the Guardians, if defeated in their frontal attack on the Bill, might do well to concentrate on some such minor modifications of its structure.



## THE HEATHER ON FIRE

By J. HENDERSON STEWART  
(Prospective Liberal Candidate for Dundee).

**O**PPPOSITION to the Government's Rating Scheme has developed along surprisingly different lines in England and in Scotland. In England criticism has centred round the actual rating proposals; the concurrent changes in local government have become a matter of secondary importance. In Scotland, broadly speaking, the reverse is true. The rating proposals, except in the few large burghs, have fallen flat; nobody seems to bother about them. But around the proposed changes in local government has risen the most heated political controversy of recent years.

To call it controversy is to flatter the Government. It would be more correct to describe it as a national revolt, for the opposition comes from every town and village in the country. Almost without exception local authorities in Scotland have condemned the scheme. Without exception national organizations of local authorities have opposed it. Party allegiance has completely disappeared in the heat of the criticism. I know, for example, of one town council, composed as to ninety per cent. of its members of life-long, die-hard Tories who, in the presence of the Conservative Member for the constituency (a member also of the Government), declared their determination to oppose the scheme to the uttermost and laughed to scorn the reply of their distinguished guest. Old observers of political events tell me that they cannot recall such an uprising of national sentiment since the time of Gladstone's Midlothian campaign. No wonder the Scottish Secretary had to give way on a major part of his proposals.

Shortly stated, the scheme proposes that with a view to the unification of administrative and financial control of the major services under a single authority in each area, parish councils, education authorities, district committees, district boards of control, and standing joint committees should be abolished. The immense change in local government involved may be realized when it is recalled that in Scotland to-day there are 869 Parish Councils, 37 Education Authorities, 98 District Committees, 27 Boards of Control and 33 Standing Joint Committees. Local government of the future is to be carried out by the existing county councils and town councils—with greatly enlarged powers in the case of the county councils and the larger burghs, and considerably restricted powers in the case of burghs having a population of less than 20,000. That is to say, in order to carry out the Government's rating policy, 1,064 individual authorities are to be swept out of existence and all power of local government concentrated in the hands of 33 county councils and 201 town councils. Indeed, the concentration goes further, for, in addition to these changes, combinations of counties are to take place in at least four cases and of burghs in at least six.

Under the Bill county councils and the town councils of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee are to become solely responsible for the administration of poor law, education, the major health services, classified roads, police, and "certain other less important services." The county will for these purposes include all burghs within its boundaries having a population of less than 20,000 and, in the case of education, all burghs of whatever size, other than the four cities just named.

In the first White Paper, it was proposed in addition to make the county councils responsible for all matters connected with housing, water, and sanitation now undertaken by the burghs with a population of under 20,000. Had the proposal been carried out the result would have been to

strip the old burghs of Scotland of every shred of real responsibility and power, and to leave them in a position of little more than lamp-lighters and street-cleaners. Sir John Gilmour had only to attend a few conferences of local authorities before he was forced to give way on this matter, and under the new Bill the small burghs are allowed to retain these powers and duties. But they will do so under very strict conditions and subject always to the over-riding power of the county council, which may take over these services at any time by the authority of the Central Department. The retention of the powers of the small burghs is, therefore, illusory, and the change will do little to placate the wrath of the town councils concerned.

The objections to the scheme are many and diverse. In the first place it has never yet been shown that there is any desire felt or expressed in Scotland for the abolition of these thousand authorities. True, some reform of the Scottish local government system has been spoken of for a number of years, but no one in his senses ever contemplated such sweeping proposals as have now been propounded by the Government. Why are they necessary? In a statement issued by Sir John Gilmour in September last in order, it is said, to clear up "misunderstanding," he deplored the failure of the Scottish people to appreciate the "essential unity of the de-rating proposals and the local government proposals." But despite his explanation we are still unconvinced. The average elector in Scotland sees no necessary connection between relief of rates and revolution in local government.

He is still more puzzled by the Scottish Secretary's defence of his actual local government changes. In the statement referred to he claimed that the Government's proposals "built solidly on the traditional structure of Scottish local government." It is impossible to believe that Sir John Gilmour wrote these words, for they are a thousand miles from the truth. To take power from the Scottish burghs and hand it over to the county councils is to act in direct opposition to the genius and traditions of Scottish local government. County government is a child compared with eight-hundred-year-old burghs like Dumfries. Fifty years ago there were no county councils. Burghal government, on the other hand, has stood the test of centuries. All through the history of Scotland the Royal Burghs have been the centre of national life. They formed the third estate in the Parliament of Scotland, and were the advisers of the King. They were the founders of commerce and trade in the country, and through their Convention they were the originators of our foreign trade. It is to the merchants of the Royal Burghs that we owe our present commercial law. Compared with this long record of brilliant achievement, the counties have done little or nothing in the building up of Scotland.

Is it building on the traditional structure of Scottish local government to abolish the parish councils that administer relief in scattered areas throughout the country, and concentrate authority in the hands of a few officials in the county town? "Imagine," declares a well-known Highlander, "what consideration the poor of Glenelg or Lochbroom are likely to get from a central authority situated in Inverness or Dingwall!" In the cities there is probably a good case for the town council taking over administration of the Poor Law, but to apply the same rule rigidly to the county districts is nothing short of madness.

Again, what justification can be found in the history of Scottish local government for the proposed abolition of *ad hoc* education authorities? Since the days of John Knox education has taken a first place in the interests of Scottish people. It has attracted and retained the devoted service of the best minds in the country. To cram it now

into the swollen agenda of a county council meeting will be to endanger the cause of education in every part of the country.

Two things stand out clearly from an examination of this measure and its reception in Scotland. The first is that the Government has received no mandate for the scheme. Only after the fullest consideration by a Royal Commission would any Government be warranted in introducing so revolutionary a measure. To carry it to the Statute Book now, in the teeth of national opposition, will be a gross betrayal of public confidence. The second is that if, despite these considerations, the Government persist with this measure it will have the immediate effect of intensifying the growth of the Scottish Home Rule Movement.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

THE depression which weighs upon the Government as they enter upon the huge and tedious task of the Session becomes more marked every day. The local authorities everywhere, alarmed by the semi-farcical Cheltenham episode, persist in looking the gift-horse in the mouth and finding it not worth accepting. It is more the misfortune than the fault of the Government that the scheme, in its fearsome elaboration, is such as lends itself, in the absence of comprehension, all too easily to excited perversion and hasty conclusions. It is certainly deplorable that the grandiose plan should fail to receive careful consideration on such merits as it possesses. Unluckily three "popular" newspapers, which are nominally Conservative but in reality for any hopeful-looking "stunt" that turns up, are in full cry against de-rating and the "reforms" in local government. Mr. Baldwin's Party Press is large, but it is provokingly unstable, and much of it is absorbed in enjoying the sensation caused by rebellion, and quite indifferent to the reproaches of "Jix" and other old-fashioned politicians who think that "Conservative" newspapers should play the party game, even to the neglect of their circulations. These papers see their account too clearly in the disquiet of the local authorities to bother overmuch about loyalty or consistency. I foresee a riot of newspaper-stimulated confusion and prejudice in the country over de-rating, which is likely to be denounced for such merits as it possesses, while its faults go unremarked for want of instructed criticism.

Mr. Churchill, who is well aware of the failure of his strategy in one more campaign—for de-rating has definitely missed fire as an election slogan—is attempting a characteristic diversion. He is reviving the Red Peril. His speech of last Friday was extremely significant, and is the prelude, I am afraid, to another unscrupulous effort to frighten the electorate into the arms of the Tory Party. Mr. Churchill has got his latest party into a mess and, politically, he is once more leading a retreat from Moscow. Quite clearly he is expressing the rueful conviction of the Tories that only a Red Letter or its equivalent will save them next summer. That is their only hope. So Mr. Churchill strikes the first blow with his rather disgraceful comparison of the Labour Government to a drunken man between two policemen, and his revival of the cry, an invention of his own, "Is Labour fit to govern?" It is obvious that we are to see a determined effort on Tory platforms to discredit the Labour Party again as the authors of the absurdly ill-named "General" Strike. The Labour leaders have long foreseen this danger; hence the carefully calculated mildness of their

recent proceedings. The Churchills will be screaming all over the country that a Labour Government means "a period of revolutionary violence." This, no doubt, is claptrap, but claptrap has paid politically before now. It must even be conceded that Mr. Churchill shows a certain skill in striking the enemy on his weakest spot. Mr. Thomas may well be indignant. He thought he had got the General Strike nicely forgotten as a lapse in a career of blameless patriotism which no one would be so tasteless and unkind as to mention now. This is, in truth, the heel of Achilles.

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The first time Mr. Ronald McNeill, now Lord Cushendun, impressed himself on the public consciousness was on that renowned occasion when he threw a book at his present colleague, Mr. Churchill, in the House of Commons. In the war, if I remember rightly, he distinguished himself chiefly—apart from the violence of anti-German tirades—as the hysterical discoverer of the War Babies peril. This is the man of whom Mr. Baldwin thinks so highly that he entrusted him with the foreign affairs of this country at a critical time for international peace. We all know the result. Mr. Baldwin recently took Mr. Lloyd George to task in the House of Commons for his outspoken but justifiable criticisms of French policy, and hinted that his articles might disqualify him from holding power again. It is perfectly right that Mr. W. H. Dawson should have reminded Mr. Baldwin (in the *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*) of some notorious criticism, or rather abuse, of Germany by Lord Cushendun, which has proved no bar to his holding high office in Mr. Baldwin's Administration. Years after the war Lord Cushendun twice publicly—once in the House of Commons—described Germany as "not only a debtor but a fraudulent, defaulting debtor." "As a nation"—a nation—Germany, he said, "is not entitled to and will not receive our sympathy." Yet Mr. Baldwin sends him to Geneva at a delicate crisis to deal with the Germans, whose nation he had insulted. These things are not, and should not be, forgotten.

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The ghosts of Sacco and Vanzetti refuse to be laid. I have been looking through the number of the *NEW YORK OUTLOOK* in which the fresh evidence is set out relating to the hold-up at Bridgewater, Mass., a crime for which Vanzetti was tried and condemned in 1921 before being put on his trial with Sacco for the Braintree murders. In September of this year the *OUTLOOK* was brought into contact with two men, who made sworn confession of their part in the Bridgewater crime. The *OUTLOOK* for October 31st contains a critical examination of these confessions by Silas Bent, the New York journalist who first got wind of the fresh evidence, and an excellent summary of the proceedings at the trial—the whole presented with perfect lucidity. This strikes me as a journalistic job thoroughly well done. The new evidence, which in the judgment of the *OUTLOOK* proves Vanzetti innocent, does not touch the crime for which the two men were executed, but, as is well known, Vanzetti's chance of acquittal for the murders was not improved by his supposed guilt in the earlier case. As further proof that this terrible affair cannot be buried I note that a play based upon it is running in New York, and that Mr. Upton Sinclair has published his novel "Boston," which is devoted wholly to the affair and its *dramatis personæ*. It fills 755 pages—a length not much less than that of Dreiser's vast "American Tragedy."

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The other day I visited in a certain London hospital a friend who is recovering from a very serious operation. I was much impressed to hear from him that he had been

told either by a doctor or a nurse that the operation could have been avoided by treatment with radium. There was not sufficient radium to go round in this hospital, where, of course, the patients were nearly all extremely poor. It seems to me a terrible thing that people should be compelled to endure the shock, agony, and danger of major operations simply because radium is not available. (There is also, I know, the time factor: cure by radium may take months, and that is a difficulty with poor wage earners.) I have no special knowledge of this subject, but when one reflects on the lavish outpouring of money on frivolous objects in this country it does seem to be an extraordinary thing that people should be suffering from avoidable operations because of the shortage of radium, and its high price. I am glad to see from an answer in Parliament that the Health Ministry is showing some activity in this matter at last. At present it is surely a national scandal that only minute quantities are available in this country, while Continental clinics possess "relatively large quantities." Any very rich man who gave half a million to be spent in supplying radium for the cure of cancer in working folk would do a splendid thing. The official report of the big Cancer Conference held in London this summer is just issued, and it contains some extremely arresting remarks on the hopefulness of radium treatment and the seriousness of the shortage of supplies.

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I have just finished reading yet one more volume of character sketches of politicians, such as are now so popular. I think I have read half a dozen such collections—on compulsion, I should explain—in the last year or so. Among them there have been one or two serious and one brilliant book, but the run of this kind of literature is quite trivial; the equivalent, between covers, of the gossip columns in the newspapers. I think the publishers might now declare a moratorium in this species of obituary before death. It has been rather overdone, and it is not, I think, really evidence of a sound interest in politics. There is something slightly feverish about the passion for slapdash "estimates" of prominent, or would-be prominent, politicians, whose personalities are subjected to the same kind of exploitation as is so eagerly practised upon cinema stars, prize fighters, and the latest murderers. If the appetite for the personal paragraph inflated to the length of the essay must be gratified, why not choose celebrities in other and less hackneyed fields. I would myself gladly read a collection, say, of "Sketches" of the personalities and still more the significant achievements of the men who are doing great, and largely unknown, things in science; the men who are perhaps quietly preparing the transformation of the world in which we live. (Perhaps there may be such books: I have missed them unfortunately in that event, and I have not been allowed to miss the umpteenth sketch of Mr. Lloyd George.) But I suspect that the public does not care about the scientists anyway.

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It was very shocking to hear of the sudden death of Lady Grey of Fallodon. Only a few days ago I saw her at a Liberal gathering with her husband, whose interests in literature, nature, and politics she so fully shared. Nearly thirty years ago Sargent painted her as one of the "Three Graces," and gracious, beautiful, and sensitive in compassion and intelligence she remained until the last. The fullness of comradeship in marriage with her famous husband is not a thing to write about, but I may express here in a word the very real sympathy that is universally felt with him in his disastrous bereavement.

KAPPA.

## A DE-RATING ALPHABET

A 'S an Assessor who asks: "Do you know Of a nice quiet Asylum to which I could go?"

B, who's a Brewer, says: "Be of good cheer; My gains will be bigger than ever this year."

C is for Chelt'nham, where nobody knows Where the money is coming from or where it goes.

D is a Driver who's deeply dismayed; The tax upon petrol has lost him his trade.

E is an Expert in Government pay; His self-satisfaction grows greater each day.

F is a Farmer; they've sold him a pup; His rates have gone down and his rent has gone up.

G is a Guardian who's getting the sack; Before very long they'll be wanting him back.

H is the Householder, scratching his head; He hoped for relief, and gets burdens instead.

I's an Industrialist—harassed and vexed; They're hoping to help him the year after next.

J is a Juggler—too clever by half; They've found him a job on the Minister's staff.

K is the Kudos (more precious than pelf) Awarded to Winston by Winston himself.

L is a Landlord who's shouting with glee: "De-rating the Farmers means money for me."

M was a Minister not too discreet, And likewise the Muddle that cost him his seat.

N is for Neville, who drew up the plan, A cold and austere Local Government fan.

O is an Orange-box, seen in a dream, Whereon there stood Winston expounding his scheme.

P is a Poor Man whose wages are small; For him and his like there is nothing at all.

Q's a Quinquennium which, as you know, Is the place where Conservative Ministers go.

R is a Ratepayer reared in a slum: He'll just have to stay there till better times come.

S is a Shareholder, radiant of soul; He means to wax fat on a Government dole.

T is a Tinker whose outlook is grim; But he isn't "productive," so that settles him.

U—Unemployment—still tends to expand; At the end of a year 'twill be taken in hand.

V is a Voter who's fond of a joke, But not even he wants a pig in a poke.

W's Winston, who's not very wise; He has just "dropped a brick" of exceptional size.

X is a formula, specious and sly; If it doesn't work nicely we substitute Y.

Y is the Yellow Book plan of Reform; The antics of Neville are keeping it warm.

Z is the Zoo where the animals are; But Whitehall has stranger exhibits by far.

HUBERT PHILLIPS.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CAN LABOUR WIN ?

SIR,—While in agreement with Mr. Basil Murray's letter in your last issue as to the practical impossibility of the Labour Party getting a clear majority at the coming election, I differ from him as to the advisability of endeavouring to arrange an entente with them, even if they should be willing to do so, which is extremely unlikely.

The policy of fighting every seat possible, while it involves three-cornered fights, is the only sound one. Thus, and thus only, can we get justice done to us. The Labour and Unionist Parties are deliberately holding back Proportional Representation or the Alternative Vote on a gambler's chance of crushing out the Liberal Party. They can only be brought to their senses by a thorough shake-up in every constituency. It may not mean victory at the coming election, but it will pave the way for a great victory at the next, which may come sooner than people think.—Yours, &c.,

Tudor House,  
Bridge Street, Walsall.  
November 19th, 1928.

JOSEPH A. LECKIE.

## THE O.T.C. AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SIR,—Your correspondent "C. W." suggests that the Public Schools Officers Training Corps should be made "free from pressure of any kind," and indeed there seems to be a general belief that the present situation would be improved, and the militaristic influence lessened, if membership of the O.T.C. were to be made genuinely voluntary, instead of compulsory or nominally voluntary as at present.

May I suggest that the militaristic influence of the O.T.C. would be increased rather than diminished by such a change? At present the Corps is extremely unpopular at most schools—I myself have just left a well-known Public School, at which I spent five years without meeting anyone who enjoyed the parades—and thus its influence is rather pacifist than otherwise. No one who dislikes the O.T.C. is going to imagine war to be anything but an extremely unpleasant business. If, on the other hand, the O.T.C. were to be made a genuinely voluntary institution, the authorities would be compelled to make the parades far more attractive than at present, as otherwise no one could be persuaded to join. Their endeavour would be to turn mock warfare into a kind of pleasant and enjoyable game; and if their efforts were successful, it is probable that real warfare would present itself in the same light to the youth of the country, a result which would indeed be disastrous.

Therefore I suggest that your correspondents and other pacifically minded people should either confine their energies to advocating complete abolition or put up with the present state of affairs. Abolition is, of course, by far the more preferable course; but the O.T.C. is such an established tradition of our Public Schools, and so many masters depend on it, wholly or in part, for their jobs, that many years and much unceasing effort will be wasted before we can expect to see it disappear.—Yours, &c.,

St. John's College, Cambridge. C. J. ROBERTSON.  
November 18th, 1928.

## REPORT OF THE STREET OFFENCES COMMITTEE

SIR,—May I ask the hospitality of your columns to give notice that, owing to the unexpected delay in the presentation of this Report to Parliament, the public meeting arranged by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene to take place on Monday night, November 26th, in the Caxton Hall, will be postponed? Judging by the Home Secretary's reply to a question on November 14th, it appears unlikely the Report will be available in time for a study of its recommendations before the date of the meeting.

A further announcement will be made after the Report is issued.—Yours, &c.,

BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH,  
Chairman of the postponed meeting.  
31, Bedford Gardens,  
Kensington, W.8.  
November 19th, 1928.

## HALF OF THOMAS HARDY\*

By VIRGINIA WOOLF.

THOMAS HARDY, it is not surprising to learn, had not sufficient admiration for himself to record his recollections and not enough interest in himself to brood over his own character. "A naturalist's interest in the hatching of a queer egg or germ is the utmost introspective consideration you should allow yourself," he wrote, and the observation was made in a pocket-book which nobody but himself was to read. Hence, though he was forced to agree that a life of him must be written, it is by his wish a life so devoid of artifice, so simple in its structure that it resembles nothing so much as the talk of an old man over the fire about his past. Much of it indeed was written down by Mrs. Hardy as he spoke it. Many of the phrases are unmistakably his own. And whatever it may lack in substance or in symmetry is more than made up for by the sound of the speaking voice and the suggestiveness which it carries with it. Indeed, by no other method could Mrs. Hardy have kept so close to her husband's spirit.

For Hardy was the last person to be subjected to the rigours of biography. Never was anyone less stereotyped, less formalized, less flattened out by the burden of fame and the weight of old age. He sprang up effortlessly, unconsciously, like a heather root under a stone, not by imposing his views or by impressing his personality, but by being simply and consistently himself. Everything he wrote—it is a quality that makes up for a thousand faults—had this integrity ingrained in it. One finds it again pervading his life. Fantastic as it sounds, one can scarcely help fancying that it was Hardy who imagined it all—the fiddling father, the mother who loved reading, the house "between woodland and heathland"; the old English family, with its legends of Monmouth and Sedgemoor, and its "spent social energies," who had come down in the world—"So we go down, down, down," said Hardy, meeting the head of his family trudging beside a common spring trap in the road. Everything takes on the colour of his own temperament. His memories have the quality of moments of vision. He could remember coming home at three in the morning from fiddling with his father—for the Hardys had fiddled in church and farm for generations without taking a penny for it, and little Tom was a dancer and a fiddler from his birth—and seeing "a white human figure without a head" in the hedge—a man almost frozen to death. He could remember the farm-women at the harvest supper "sitting on a bench against the wall in the barn and leaning against each other as they warbled,

"Lie there, lie there, thou false-hearted man,  
Lie there instead o' me."

He could remember how his father, the music-loving builder, would stroll on to the heath alone with the telescope that had belonged to some sea-faring Hardy and "stay peering out into the distance by the half-hour." He could remember how he had once stood on the heath and put that same brass telescope to his eye and seen a man in white fustian on the gallows at Dorchester. At that moment the figure "dropped downward and the faint note of the town clock struck eight," and he seemed alone on the heath with the hanged man. But more distinctly than anything else he could remember lying on his back as a small boy and thinking how useless he was and how he did not wish to grow up—"he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was in the same spot, and to know no more people than he

\* "The Early Life of Thomas Hardy." By Florence Emily Hardy. (Macmillan. 18s.)

already knew (about half a dozen). Yet . . . he was in perfect health and happy circumstances."

So the memories succeed each other, like poems, visualized and complete. It was thus, perhaps, that Hardy's mind worked when it was most at its ease, flashing its light fitfully and capriciously like a lantern swinging in a hand, now on a rose-bush, now on a tramp frozen in the hedge. He has none of that steady and remorseless purpose that people would attribute to him. It was by chance that he saw things, not by design. He puts the telescope to his eye and there is a man on the gallows. He walks in Dorchester High Street and sees the gipsy girls with their big brass earrings in the light from a silversmith's shop. At once these sights shape themselves into poems and set themselves to some old tune that has been running in his mind. He stops to muse upon their meaning. He cannot hold firmly on his way. Indeed, he "cared for life only as an emotion and not as a scientific game"; he did not want to grow up and possess things. Hence the doubts and the fluctuations of his career. He might have gone to Cambridge had he chosen, but he did not make the effort. He fumbled about with architecture, pulled down the old churches that he loved and built new ones. Now he was going to devote himself to poetry, now to fiction. One result of this vacillation seems to have been that he lay singularly open to influence. He wrote a satirical novel in the manner of Defoe, and because Meredith advised him to write another with a more complicated plot, he sat down and wrote "Desperate Remedies" with a plot as complicated as a mediæval mouse-trap. When THE SPECTATOR said that the novel (because there is a rich spinster in it with an illegitimate child) was rightly anonymous, for even a *nom-de-plume* might "at some future time disgrace the family name, and still more the Christian name, of a repentant and remorseful novelist," Hardy sat on a stile and wished himself dead. It was in deference to another critic, John Morley, that he wrote "Under the Greenwood Tree" in the pastoral manner; and it was in reply to the jibes of the journalists, who said that he was a house decorator, that he put aside the first version of "The Woodlanders" and proved his sophistication by writing "The Hand of Ethelberta."

All this deference to authority, which contrasts so queerly with the perfectly uncompromising character of his genius, comes no doubt from some inertness of temper in the descendant of a spent race; but it rose, too, from a fact which Hardy himself noticed, that he came to maturity much later than most men. His gifts lay hidden far longer than is usual. Poems dropped now and again into a drawer. But the desire to write poetry seems to have been fitful and dubious even when he was at the most poetic age. Bread and butter had to be earned, however, and therefore reluctantly and hesitatingly, without the illusions or the hot-headedness of the born novelist he stumbled into a calling for which he had little respect, and for which, if he had magnificent gifts, he had also great disabilities.

For though it was all very well to write novels like "Far from the Madding Crowd" upon chips of wood or white leaves or even upon flat stones out of doors, he was persuaded that a novelist, to be successful, must describe manners and customs. He must live in town. He must frequent dinners, and clubs and crushes. He must keep a note-book. And so, though Hardy could not bear the touch of an arm upon his shoulder, and a note-book in his pocket made him "barren as the Sahara," he faced the position squarely; rented a house in Upper Tooting, bought a note-book, and dined out nightly. "Certainly," exclaimed Miss Thackeray, when he consulted her, "a novelist must necessarily like society!"

Society seen from Upper Tooting looked a little queer. He put the brass telescope to his eye and saw the strangest sights. Men and women were being hung even in the gayest streets. He mused upon the passions and sorrows that raged in the breasts of the crowd at the Marble Arch. He lay in bed at Upper Tooting and could not sleep because he lay so close "to a monster who had four heads and eight million eyes." He sat next Lady Camperdown at dinner "and could not get rid of the feeling that I was close to a great naval engagement." But he also noted down the correct things. He met Matthew Arnold, who "had a manner of having made up his mind upon everything years ago," and Henry James, "who has a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences"; and old Mrs. Proctor, "who swam about through the crowd like a swan"; and Byron's Ianthe, "a feeble beldame muffled up in black and furs"; and the Carnarvons and the Salisburys and the Portsmouths—and of all this he took note as a novelist should. Moreover, when the books were finished he did whatever the editors required him to do to make them saleable. Book after book appeared in magazines with passages cut out or with incidents put in to please the British public. For if the whole thing—in this case the whole thing was "The Mayor of Casterbridge"—was "mere journey work," did it very much matter what compromise he made? Fiction was a trade like another—off he went to the Crawford-Dilke case, note-book in hand. Yet now and then the note-book would record a state of mind or a thought that was quite unsuitable for fiction. For instance: ". . . when I enter into a room to pay a simple morning call I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I were a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment; only fit to behold and say, as another spectre said, 'Peace be unto you.' " Or again he mused, "people are somnambulists—the material is not the real—only the visible, the real being invisible optically."

For while with one-half of his mind Hardy noted down what a successful novelist ought to observe, the other half remorselessly saw through these observations and turned them to moonshine. Hardy, of course, might have suppressed the second half; he might have succeeded in writing agreeable cynical novels of London life like any other. But that obstinate conviction that made him for all his efforts an outsider, that faculty for putting the telescope to his eye and seeing strange, grim pictures—if he went to a First-Aid lecture he saw children in the street behind a skeleton, if he went to a French play he saw a cemetery behind the players' heads—all this fecundity and pressure of the imagination brought about at last not a compromise but a solution. Why run about with note-books observing manners and customs when his mind involuntarily flooded itself with strange imaginations and sung itself scraps of old ballads? Why not simplify, make abstract, give the whole rather than the detail? Again the note-book records certain ideas that would be out of place in a novel. "The 'simply natural' is interesting no longer. The much decried, mad, late-Turner rendering is now necessary to create my interest. The exact truth as to material fact ceases to be of importance in art—I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings." But it was a question how far abstract imagination could be expressed in a novel. Would not realities fatally conflict with that observation of manners and customs which Hardy, so simply and so modestly, had accepted as the staple of the novelist's trade?

The first half of Hardy's life ends with that note of interrogation. We have reached the year 1891. He has



written "Tess of the D'Urbervilles." It has appeared in *THE GRAPHIC*. At the editor's request, Hardy has omitted the christening scene; he has allowed the milkmaids to be wheeled across the lane in a wheelbarrow instead of being carried in Clare's arms; and, although one father of daughters still objects that the bloodstain on the ceiling is indecent—"Hardy could never understand why"—the book is a great success. But, we ask ourselves, what is going to happen next?

## THE CIGAR BOX

**C**IGAR boxes may be used for many purposes other than holding cigars. They make, as it occurs to me, excellent cabinets for birds' eggs and butterflies, they can be used with suitable perforations for the breeding of silkworms, or in their natural state as a repository for string and sealing wax, luggage labels, and old pocket knives. Their peculiar aromatic smell renders them permanently attractive, and I know few people who, when their proper contents are burnt, have the heart to throw them away. In our village this week we have been turning them into money boxes, and as such they stand on the counters of our few shops and on those of our three public-houses. One imaginative inn-keeper has covered his with white paper and written on it in a clear hand: "For the distressed Rye Lifeboat and those that go down to the sea."

Poor little lifeboat—that, at least is no longer distressed, nor is ever likely to be again, but we know what our landlord means, and his box is already heavy with coppers that might have been spent on his own good beer. For the first time in our civilian lives we have learnt, in our village, what it means to be in close proximity to a great tragedy. Rye is only a few miles away. Many of us knew members of that crew of seventeen.

One has seen often enough those drab pictures in the illustrated papers of the watchers at the pit-head, has read, without much emotion the words of the journalist who says, "the whole town is plunged in grief," but never before that dreadful Thursday have I, for one, realized how true that journalese can be.

There is Dungeness between us and Rye Harbour, and in our own bay, that morning, there was excitement enough; for hours, we watched the struggles of the Hythe lifeboat to reach a three-masted schooner which had shown signals of distress. Backwards and forwards the little craft tacked, and it seemed that, in those heavy seas, she could never reach her object. How many hours she was out I do not know, but about midday we saw the schooner raise her sails and make away to the east, the lifeboat, a puppy, as it were, still guarding its wounded mistress, following in her wake for Folkestone harbour. At that moment we decided to go home to that meal which we still call our "dinner."

On my way back I met one of our two coastguards, rheumy eyed after his long night watch, carrying on his shoulders a ship's ladder which he had just salvaged from the incoming tide. I chaffed him about his useful bit of wreckage, but, Lord knows, it was no time for chaff. "Trouble t'other side of the Point," he shouted through the gale, "taking this back to the station in case it's any use for identification," and then he added, as if scarcely able to speak the words, "Rye lifeboat's capsized—all hands gone."

For him, an old sailor boy, it must have been almost too dreadful a piece of news to impart, but for us landmen it was bad enough. There was the whole ghastly tragedy only obscured from us by a strip of shingle. Never again

shall I smile when I read the reporter's cliché, "The little community is sunk in mourning," for that is precisely what we were. For the rest of the day, and until the evening, we went about whispering as if outside a death chamber. The small crowd that gathers outside our newsagent's for the evening editions was there half an hour before the papers could possibly be expected to arrive. When they did come they were snatched up and read by the light of the shop window. But there was no gleam of hope.

So without any very articulate expression of our feelings we drifted back into the pubs again. Beer is tasteless enough in such circumstances, but a habit is a habit, and it was better for us to keep together. Then it was that the cigar boxes began to make their appearance. Mr. George of the New Inn, a man, in any case, of few words, was observed to be cutting a slit in the lid of one, which done, he threw it on the counter and said, "Least we can do, boys." Money is a strange and terrible thing, but the strangest thing about it is, I think, that by paying a little of it away on such an occasion one feels more reconciled. I do not believe that this is anything more than a reconciliation with oneself, and therefore as selfish (and as sensible) as shedding a waistcoat on a warm day. But it is remarkable what a comfort to us those cigar boxes are.

J. B. S. B.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

**"THE RUNAWAYS,"** Mr. Eden Phillpotts's new play at the Garrick, is largely the mixture as before. The first act is very much better than the same author's other plays, the other two rather inferior, because the whole play is built up round a secret which is withheld from the audience until the end. Furthermore, no adequate reason is provided for there being a secret at all, and the only purpose it serves seems to be to keep the play going; which is all very well from the working dramatist's point of view, but fatal to one's enjoyment. If the farmer could have told us at the end of Act I. why he was saving his money and who was the "yellow-haired woman" of whom his wife and her little admirer entertained suspicions, Acts II. and III. might have completed a very merry little comedy, but as it is we were merely irritated at his facetiousness. The best character, admirably played by Mr. Colin Keith-Johnstone, is his son, who, having been jilted, decides to end his life, but not until after the hay-making. The rest are well drawn, but show no development, despite the valiant efforts of Mr. Sam Livesey, Mr. Ben Field, Miss Eileen Beldon, and others. However, much may be forgiven an entertainment which provides such an excellent definition of suicide as "gate-crashing into heaven."

\* \* \*

It is no reflection on Sir Hugh Allen and Sir Henry Wood to say that the pleasure with which one had looked forward to the Philharmonic Society's second concert of the season was to a certain extent dispelled by the announcement that Sir Hamilton Harty, who was originally to have conducted it, was indisposed, and that they would therefore deputize for him. It would have been unreasonable to expect that Sir Hugh Allen could at such short notice give as authoritative a reading of Schubert's unfamiliar Mass in E flat as a conductor who had been studying it for some time, and with the best will in the world it could hardly be said that Sir Henry Wood is at any time capable of giving as fine a performance of Berlioz's "Romeo and Juliet," excerpts from which constituted the most attractive feature of the programme, as Sir Hamilton Harty, who is, above all, a Berlioz specialist. It is enough to say that both they and the orchestra did their best under difficult circumstances, and that the fine singing of the Philharmonic choir, which had obviously been



thoroughly trained and rehearsed beforehand by Mr. Kennedy Scott, did a great deal to save the situation in the Schubert Mass—a work with fine moments in it, but as a whole hardly representative of its composer at his best. "Romeo," on the other hand, is Berlioz at his very best, and a tribute is incidentally due to the Philharmonic Society for its enterprising programmes, in such striking contrast to those of some rival organizations. For this and other virtues it deserves better luck from Heaven and a greater degree of support from the musical public than it is in the habit of receiving.

\* \* \*

During the last few weeks a kind of miniature Bach festival, consisting of three concerts entirely devoted to the master's chamber music, has been in progress at the Wigmore Hall, the executants being an exceptionally fine collection of artists including Miss Dorothy Silk, Miss Myra Hess, Miss Isolde Menges, and Messrs. Harold Samuel and Joseph Slater, supported by the London String Players under Mr. Herbert Menges. It would be difficult to speak too highly both of the excellent choice of programmes and of the admirable standard of performance maintained throughout, and it is pleasant to note that this was recognized by the public, for at the third concert the house was sold out, with "standing room only" at the back of the hall for late-comers, for all the world like a cinema theatre. The sequel is that there is to be another similar concert with the same artists on December 12th, which readers of THE NATION who are also lovers of Bach are emphatically recommended to attend.

\* \* \*

Mr. Douglas Davidson, who is holding his first "one-man" exhibition at Messrs. Cooling's galleries, 92, New Bond Street, is one of the younger members of the London Artists' Association, and certainly one of the most promising. Those who have noticed his work in various mixed exhibitions, at the London Group, the London Artists' Association, and elsewhere, will see here a very marked improvement, especially in his handling of paint. His colour has been, and still is his strongest point (as opposed to his drawing), and in his recent work he has learned to make the most of it and has improved the quality of his paint: this is especially noticeable in the four larger landscapes and in such still-life paintings as "Daisies and Petunia," "Marigolds," and "Still Life sketch." The two most ambitious works here are a large and well-designed "Nude" and "The Tea-Party"; the latter is excellent in design and very pleasing in colour, but is prevented from being entirely successful by a certain inconsistency in the density of the treatment from the realistic point of view. It is a good sign in Mr. Davidson's work that he is not afraid to experiment with different styles of technique—which also gives variety and liveliness to the exhibition as a whole.

\* \* \*

Three short films were shown as a prelude to a German film version of Ibsen's "The Wild Duck" at the performance of the Film Society last Sunday. The first, "Aerial Acrobatics," contained some very remarkable photographs of stunt-flying by a well-known French pilot, M. Marcel Doret; the second, entitled "Munchausen," was a silhouette film made in 1920 by Herr Felgenauer, and told some of the famous Munchausen stories with great ingenuity; the third, "The Little Capet," was made probably about 1908, and is extremely primitive and naïf in technique; it deals with the story of the unfortunate Louis XVII. of France, his father, and his mother, Marie Antoinette. As for "The Wild Duck," it is difficult to see why anybody should have supposed Ibsen's play to be a suitable subject for a film. The photography and settings are excellent, the acting, with Werner Krauss, Lucie Höflich, and Mary Johnson, very much above the average, but all this is wasted in the intolerably slow movement of the story. Every smallest incident is drawn out interminably, and without the dramatic dialogue of the play, without the gradual development of character, it never becomes interesting till the climax at the end. It is curious that an

intelligent German producer should have made such an extremely dull film.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, November 24th.—

"Mass in D," by Dame Ethel Smyth, and Schubert's "The Song of Miriam," Royal Albert Hall, 2.30 (Royal Choral Society).

League of Arts' Choir. Mozart's "Requiem," Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

Adela Verne, Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

"This Woman Business," by Mr. Ben Levy, at the A.D.C. Theatre, Cambridge (Nov. 24th-Dec. 1st).

Sunday, November 25th.—

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, on "The New Church Crisis," South Place, 11.

Monday, November 26th.—

"The Hairy Ape," by Eugene O'Neill, at the Festival Theatre, Cambridge (November 26th-December 1st).

"Burlesque," by Mr. Arthur Hopkins and Mr. G. N. Watters, at the Golders Green Hippodrome.

"The Eternal Spring," by Mr. Peter Garland, at the Scala (November 26th-27th).

"The Man in the Dock," by Mr. Noel Doon and Mr. Jack Celestin, at the "Q."

London Symphony Orchestra Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

Sir Hugh Bell, on "Free Trade," Eighty Club Dinner, National Liberal Club, 7.15.

Tuesday, November 27th.—

British Women's Symphony Orchestra Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

Windsor Strollers, in "Hay Fever," Royal Theatre, Windsor (November 27th-December 1st).

Miss V. Sackville-West, on "Modern English Poetry," the Wireless, 6.

Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, on "Rationalism and the Religious Outlook," Small Essex Hall, 7.30.

Wednesday, November 28th.—

Maazell, Piano Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

Anthony Williams, Vocal Recital, Æolian Hall, 8.

Gerhardt, Second Schubert Centenary Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.30.

Thursday, November 29th.—

"Madame Butterfly," at the Old Vic, 7.45.

Dame Katharine Furze, on "A Woman on the Jury," the Wireless, 3.45.

Friday, November 30th.—

Major Walter Elliot, on "The Trend of our World Trade," the Wireless, 7.25.

OMICRON.

## A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

THE ATHENÆUM, NOVEMBER 19TH, 1928.

A CASE OF DEEP DISTRESS.—The benevolent consideration of the public is most respectfully and earnestly solicited on behalf of the WIDOW and FAMILY of a GENTLEMAN, whose awfully sudden death has left his young family wholly destitute and unprovided for. The widowed mother gave birth to her sixth little orphan, surrounded by difficulty and distress, three months after the death of its lamented father. In the house where she sought a temporary residence, the whole of her things were seized; and, in the height of severe illness, with two of her children by her side, the bed was taken from under them, and in that situation they were for many nights without food or covering. Subsequently to this event the widow was arrested. She has obtained her freedom by the "Benefit of the Act," but she returns to her family, deprived of every resource, and in greatly impaired health. She most respectfully appeals to a generous Public on behalf of her fatherless children, that she may be enabled to pursue some plan for their future support. . . .

The following donations are respectfully and gratefully acknowledged:

Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent	... £2 0 0
Countess of Athlone	... 1 1 0
Henry Woodthorpe, Esq., Guildhall	... 2 0 0
J. S. Buckingham, Esq.	... 2 0 0

## London Amusements.

### BARRY JACKSON'S PRODUCTIONS.

#### GARRICK THEATRE.

Gerrard 9513.

Every Evening at 8.30.

Matinees Weds. &amp; Sats. at 2.30.

#### THE RUNAWAYS

A New Comedy by EDEN PHILLPOTTS.

AUTHOR OF

"THE FARMER'S WIFE" and "YELLOW SANDS."

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#### BIRD IN HAND

A Comedy by John Drinkwater.

250TH PERFORMANCE AND SOUVENIR NIGHT  
TO-NIGHT (FRIDAY), NOVEMBER 23rd.HERBERT LOMAS.  
JILL ESMOND.IVOR BARNARD.  
FELIX AYLMEYER.

### MATINEES FOR THE WEEK.

COURT. Thurs. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

DUKE OF YORK'S. Wed. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

DRURY LANE. Wed. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

FORTUNE. Thurs. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

GAIETY. Wed., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.

GARRICK. Weds. &amp; Sats., 2.30.

HIPPODROME. Wed., Thurs. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

"THE CRITIC," etc.

SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS.

SHOW BOAT.

"NAPOLEON'S JOSEPHINE."

TOPSY &amp; EVA.

THE RUNAWAYS.

"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."

LONDON PAVILION. Tues. &amp; Thurs., 2.30.

LYRIC, Hammersmith. Wed &amp; Sat. 2.30.

PLAYHOUSE. Wed., Thurs. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

PRINCES. Wed. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

ROYALTY. Thurs. &amp; Sat., 2.30.

ST. MARTIN'S. Mon., Tues &amp; Fri., 2.40.

WYNDHAM'S. Wed., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.

THIS YEAR OF GRACE.

A HUNDRED YEARS' OLD.

EXCELSIOR.

FUNNY FACE.

BIRD IN HAND.

"77 PARK LANE."

"TO WHAT RED HELL."

### THEATRES.

ALDWYCH. (Gerrard 2304.)

NIGHTLY, at 8.15.

Matinees, Wednesdays and Fridays, 2.30.

"PLUNDER." A New Farce by Ben Travers.

TOM WALLS, Mary Brough, and RALPH LYNN.

COURT (Sloane 5137.)

"THE CRITIC."

Followed by "TWO GENTLEMEN OF SOHO."

EVENINGS at 8.30.

MATS., THURS. &amp; SAT., 2.30.

DRURY LANE. (Temple Bar 7171.) 8.15 precisely. Wed., Sat., 2.30.

"SHOW BOAT." A New Musical Play.

DUKE OF YORK'S. (Ger. 0313.) EVGS., 8.30. MATS., WED., SAT., 2.30.

"SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS."

MATHESON LANG

ISOBEL ELSOM

FORTUNE (Temple Bar 7373.)

"NAPOLEON'S JOSEPHINE."

EDITH EVANS.

LESLIE BANKS.

NIGHTLY, at 8.30.

ATHENE SEYLER.

LEON QUARTERMAINE.

MATS., THURS. &amp; SAT., at 2.30.

GAIETY. (Ger. 2780.)

EVGS., 8.15. WED., THURS., SAT., 2.30.

DUNCAN SISTER and GRACIE FIELDS in

"TOPSY &amp; EVA."

GARRICK. (Gerrard 9513.)

CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.

For full particulars see Special Advertisement above.

HIPPODROME, London. Evenings, at 8.15.

Gerrard 0650.

MATINEES, WEDS., THURS. &amp; SATS., at 2.30.

"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."

JACK BUCHANAN.

ELSIE RANDOLPH.

LYRIC Hammersmith.

"A HUNDRED YEARS OLD."

EVENINGS, at 8.30.

MATS., WED. &amp; SAT., 2.30.

Horace Hodges, Angela Baddeley, Nigel Playfair, Mabel Terry Lewis.

### THEATRES.

PLAYHOUSE. 8.30 (except Mondays). Mats., Wed., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.

GLADYS COOPER in "EXCELSIOR."

Ernest Thesiger, Nigel Bruce, Athole Stewart, Hermione Baddeley.

PRINCES. (Ger. 3400.)

"FUNNY FACE."

FRED ASTAIRE, ADELE ASTAIRE, and LESLIE HENSON.

Evenings, at 8.15.

Matinees, Wed. and Sat., at 2.30.

ROYALTY. (Ger. 2690.)

Dean Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.1.

For full particulars see Special Advertisement above.

ST. MARTIN'S. (Gerr. 1243.) At 8.15. MATS., MON., TUES., FRI., 2.40.

"77 PARK LANE." By Walter Hackett.

HUGH WAKEFIELD and MARION LORNE.

SAVOY. Evenings, 8.30. Matinees, Monday, Wednesday &amp; Thursday, 2.30.

"YOUNG WOODLEY."

FRANK LAWTON.

KATHLEEN O'REGAN.

WYNDHAM'S (Reg. 3028.)

EVGS., 8.30. WED., THURS., SAT., 2.30.

"TO WHAT RED HELL."

SARA ALLGOOD, ROBERT HORTON, FREDERICK LEISTER.

### CINEMAS.

EMPIRE, Leicester Square. Continuous, Noon—11 p.m. Suns., 6.0—11 p.m.

LON CHANEY in "LAUGH, CLOWN, LAUGH."

Comedies, Movietone, News, etc.

SENSATIONAL POPULAR PRICES.

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DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, New Programme, 6 to 10.30.)

November 26th, 27th &amp; 28th. MATHESON LANG in "THE TRIUMPH OF THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL"; TIM MCCOY in "THE ADVENTURER"; Harry Moore; Vera Devna, Soprano.

November 29th, 30th &amp; December 1st. WALLACE BEERY and RAYMOND HATTON in "WIFE SAVERS"; MONTY BANKS in "A PERFECT GENTLEMAN"; Novelli, Tenor; Blaney and Weston, Musical Novelty.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## "A FLY IS STRUGGLING IN THE WEB"

"THE Diary of Tolstoy's Wife, 1860-1891," translated by Alexander Werth (Gollancz, 12s. 6d.), and "The Diary of Dostoyevsky's Wife," translated from the German edition by Madge Pemberton (Gollancz, 21s.), are appropriately published almost simultaneously by the same publisher in the same green binding. I found the first enthralling, the second entrancing, but it is perhaps necessary to add a word of warning explanation, for tastes are so different that many people might not share my enthusiasm. The psychological clash between Tolstoy and his wife is famous, and the story of it is the subject of many volumes. It seems to me profoundly interesting and dramatic. We know Tolstoy's side of it, and in "The Autobiography of Countess Sophie Tolstoy," published in Russia in 1921, and in an English translation in 1922, we have Sophie Andreevna's case put before the world by herself. The autobiography was written in 1913, three years after Tolstoy's "going away" and death; the Countess wrote it as if it were a defence of her life in a trial before the world, a trial in which Tolstoy was the accuser and she the accused. It is a moving and deeply interesting book; but it is written *ex post facto*, and is a public defence. In the present diary, however, we look deeper into her mind and into her relations with Tolstoy, for here we have the private record of their daily life and her daily thoughts. The diary is not continuous; for days, weeks, sometimes months, she writes nothing in it, but she kept it spasmodically from October 8th, 1862 (they were married on September 24th, 1862), until January 23rd, 1891. It is difficult to believe that there are many people who would not feel interest in this psychological drama. The diary of Anna Grigorevna, Dostoyevsky's wife, might however bore some people. There is something extraordinarily dreary and sordid which everywhere clings to the daily life of Dostoyevsky. It clings even to these pages which describe in immense detail his honeymoon. The eternal debts and money difficulties, the mad gambling, the everlasting story of bad hotels, dirty rooms, swindling waiters, disgusting food, quarrels, and epileptic fits—they fill the girl's diary, just as they filled the life of the author of "The Brothers Karamazov." Nevertheless, the book is, I think, fascinating, partly because of the charming character of the girl, and partly because it allows one again to see deep into the psychology of two people, one of whom happened to be a great writer.

\* \* \*

It is clearly a terrible thing to marry a great novelist, at any rate if he be a great Russian novelist. On January 19th, 1891, when Sophie Andreevna Tolstoy was in her forty-seventh year and had been married to Tolstoy for nearly thirty years, she sat down one evening to write her diary, and this is what she wrote:—

"I am still ill—my stomach and feverish condition are the same. As if in a dream, I taught the children music for two hours, and corrected the long proof of 'The Kreutzer Sonata.' It amazes me how much good work I can do. Only it's a pity that I never had an opportunity of applying my abilities to something higher and worthier than mere mechanical labour. . . .

"There is such an obvious thread connecting the early diaries with 'The Kreutzer Sonata': and a buzzing fly is struggling in the web—and the spider has sucked its blood. . . ."

"A buzzing fly is struggling in the web," describes the wife of Dostoyevsky as well as the wife of Tolstoy. Their

fate was the same; only the social class from which they came and their characters were different, and so while the spider sucked the blood of the jealous Countess, the naive typist escaped. The Countess was seventeen when she married Tolstoy, already a distinguished author, aged thirty-four; Anna Grigorevna, the shorthand-typist, was a mere child, as Dostoyevsky said, when she married him, already the author of "Crime and Punishment" and aged forty-six. The morning after his marriage, Tolstoy wrote in his diary: "Incredible happiness! I can't believe that this can last as long as life!" It did not. Two weeks later his wife was writing in her diary: "I am terribly sad and take refuge in myself. My husband is ill, bad-tempered, and doesn't love me. . . . He grows colder and colder every day, while I go on loving him more and more. His coldness will soon become unbearable." Terrible quarrels broke out between them, and it was the quarrels which lasted until the day when Tolstoy lay dying in Astapovo railway station, and, to quote the autobiography,

"I, his wife of forty-eight years, was not admitted to see him. The door of the room was locked, and, when I wanted to get a glimpse of my husband through the window, a curtain was drawn across it."

The experience of Dostoyevsky's wife in the early days of marriage was exactly the same. The same quarrelling begins within a week or two of the wedding. The ingenuous, inexperienced girl suddenly finds herself expected to be the intimate, hourly companion of the irritable, epileptic genius, who sits up half the night writing "The Idiot," and who is exasperated all day long by waiters, cabmen, passport officials, Germans who are so stupid that they cannot understand his hopeless attempts to speak their language, and people whose reserved seats he appropriates in railway carriages. "A buzzing fly is struggling in the web."

\* \* \*

The fate of the two flies, as I said, was entirely different. That was due, in part, to the difference of the flies' character. But it was also due partly to a difference in the spiders' character. In Gorky's "Reminiscences," he again and again refers to the aloofness of Tolstoy. He is a pilgrim "terribly homeless and alien to all men and things"; he is one of those to whom "people are stumps, roots, stones on the path; one stumbles over them, and sometimes is hurt by them." Gorky knew Tolstoy only when he was an old man. But years before the wife had felt this terrible aloofness which fell upon her like the chill of autumn; within a year of her marriage, she writes: "he seems to be alone all the time." The small-minded countess was the last person capable of dealing with this terrific spider. But Dostoyevsky was a much more human spider, and the typist knew exactly how to treat him. When she used his comb, about which he was extremely fussy, without his permission and broke three of its teeth, she was in a terrible state and cried half the morning. But when he was completely unreasonable and they quarrelled, she would first lose her temper and then suddenly begin to laugh at him; and then he would begin to laugh too and forget about the waiters and the debts and the stupidity of the Germans, and he would go off and spend his few remaining pennies shooting at a dummy stag in a shooting gallery, or he would sit writing "The Idiot," while she fell asleep over "Les Misérables" or "Nicholas Nickleby."

LEONARD WOOLF.



## REVIEWS

## MR. STRACHEY'S NEW BOOK

*Elizabeth and Essex: A Tragico History.* By LYTTON STRACHEY.  
(Chatto & Windus. 15s.)

"EMINENT VICTORIANS" set a fashion in biography which has been followed in all too many books. But not in "Elizabeth and Essex." Mr. Strachey has the reputation of a cynical writer who delights in mocking at high aspirations and putting down the mighty from their seats. It is true that he has shown himself a master of irony, and that he dislikes religion and patriotism in most of their forms. (Is he not a historian, familiar with their consequences?) But the various figures he has treated emerge far more lively from his hands: the whitewash he removed was not an embellishment. And to the perceptive reader it was always apparent that his heart was at least as strong as his head. In his new book he reveals himself, as I think in his true colours, as an incurable romantic. There is hardly a touch of irony, save at the expense of Bacon and the Spaniards. (And these are the enemies of his hero.) The book is designed and executed as a picturesque tragedy. Its seventeen chapters might be rearranged into five acts. The folly of one protagonist, the inhumanity of the other, are passed over as lightly as may be. Fate and the villains shoulder all the blame.

And what a stupendous theme for the dramatist this is. First the Queen, obstinately irresolute, consistently various, iron-willed yet torn by the insatiable urgency of her senses. Then the lover, impetuous and ambitious, fascinated by her terrific personality as well as by the power her favour brings, yet disgusted—can we doubt it?—by her ageing body and fraudulent appetites. And, best of all, Francis Bacon, as politic as Machiavelli, and meaner than Judas, subtly inducing the Queen to kill the man she loves, the man to whom he owes everything. It is Bacon, rather than Elizabeth or Essex, whom Mr. Strachey with a fine instinct has made the dominating figure of his book. There may be no greater philosopher in English history: there is certainly no greater cad. His cynicism in outraging every principle of law, as in the Peacham and Overbury cases, equals his contempt for all personal ties, as in his almost incredible treachery to Essex. And when he came to his punishment, it was not for such heroic villainies as these, but for a squalid business of accepting bribes from individual litigants. And yet there are those who believe he wrote the works of Shakespeare. Only Shakespeare, it is true, could do him justice: Webster had too crude an imagination. Listen to Mr. Strachey:—

"Francis Bacon has been described more than once with the crude vigour of antithesis; but in truth such methods are singularly inappropriate to his most unusual case. It was not by the juxtaposition of a few opposites, but by the infiltration of a multitude of highly varied elements, that his mental composition was made up. He was no striped frieze; he was shot silk. The detachment of speculation, the intensity of personal pride, the uneasiness of nervous sensibility, the urgency of ambition, the opulence of superb taste—these qualities blending, twisting, flashing together, gave to his secret spirit the subtle and glittering superficies of a serpent. A serpent, indeed, might well have been his emblem—the wise, sinuous, dangerous creature, offspring of mystery and the beautiful earth. The music sounds, and the great snake rises, and spreads his hood, and leans and hearkens, swaying in ecstasy; and even so the sage Lord Chancellor in the midst of some great sentence, some high intellectual confection, seems to hold his breath in a rich beatitude, fascinated by the deliciousness of sheer style. A true child of the Renaissance, his multiplicity was not merely that of mental-accomplishment, but of life itself. His mind might move with joy among altitudes and theories, but the variegated savour of temporal existence was no less dear to him—the splendours of high living—the intricacies of Court intrigue—the exquisiteness of pages—the lights reflected from small pieces of coloured glass. Like all the greatest spirits of the age, he was instinctively and profoundly an artist."

As this quotation shows, Mr. Strachey's style has taken on a new sumptuousness to fit his subject. He has been reproached for his continual use of abstractions. His words are counters: they reverberate, but they do not ring. Most of his metaphors are dead. This is no doubt deliberate in him, a part of the Grand Manner in which by preference

he clothes his thoughts. Macaulay, Gibbon, the classical authors of France, and, in his new book, the Anglican doctors, have all contributed to this style. It is admirably suited to describing the Court of Queen Anne. It cannot, I think, persuade us that we are breathing the air of the sixteenth century. "Who," writes Mr. Strachey, "can reconstruct those iron-nerved beings who passed with rapture from some divine madrigal sung to a lute by a bewitching boy in a tavern to the spectacle of mauled dogs tearing a bear to pieces?" Evidently their parallels are to be found in the cafés of Seville rather than at Chanteloup or Hawarden. And reading of Mr. Strachey's Essex and Raleigh, we sometimes feel that the artist has transformed his originals, as Dryden and Tiepolo have imposed upon our imagination, instead of the tight figures of Egyptian sculpture, a Cleopatra languid in satins and a Pharaoh's daughter voluptuously plumed.

Accept this Grand Manner, and how masterly Mr. Strachey's handling appears. Like Racine, he is absorbed by the picturesqueness, not of the decor, but of the situation, the characters. To heighten it, he lets his fancy play among their secret thoughts, undeterred by the horrid examples of his predecessors. Elizabeth in her daydreams is Hercules on fire for Hylas; is Woman overthrowing the idea of virility, and avenging Anne Boleyn. The grateful reader will, I think, accept these speculations in the right spirit. But one may object to the implications in Mr. Strachey's picture of Bacon's end, "An old man, disgraced, shattered, alone, on Highgate Hill, stuffing a dead fowl with snow." The facts are true, but in his pursuit of the picturesque Mr. Strachey carefully does not mention that this was no Lear but a scientist experimenting with a method which to-day provides every English butcher's shop with Australian mutton.

If here and there he chips away a fragment to shape his story, he achieves his purpose completely. He infects the reader with his own sympathy for the passions he describes. We execrate the treacherous Bacon, we burn with Essex to commit resounding follies, and with Elizabeth we answer actively to his exciting presence. History has fallen into the hands of dull scientists and epigrammatic charlatans. But if Mr. Strachey ever omits the facts, he always knows them. To our continual solace and delight, he keeps history an art.

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

## THE INQUISITION AND WITCHES

*Malleus Maleficarum.* Translated into English by the REV. MONTAGUE SUMMERS. (Rodker. 35s.)

MR. SUMMERS was not well advised in publishing a translation of the "*Malleus Maleficarum*." He complains that it is a work which is "scarcely known" at the present day, and does not realize that it would have been better to let it remain in the obscurity of the bloodthirsty and intolerant age to which it belongs. But he has preferred to drag it out into the light of the modern times and to force on us a knowledge of barbarity and perfidy which was fast becoming an incredible legend. No one can read, without horror and loathing, the Judas-methods enjoined on the ecclesiastical judges, who were appointed to try a witch. The "*Malleus Maleficarum*" deliberately sets down all the details of the legal process against a suspected witch. This always began with a secret information laid by a witness who volunteered his evidence; but, if no such witness were forthcoming, the judge, i.e., the bishop or other ecclesiastic of high rank, might go to a place where witches were suspected, and let it be known that he was prepared to receive such information. Witnesses of any class of society, including notorious evil-doers and criminals, could give secret evidence, and their names were not to be disclosed to the accused or to her advocate, if she were permitted to have one. Only a mortal enemy of the accused was disqualified as a witness; and even this difficulty was more apparent than real, for the judge was to "take care not to lend too easy belief to the Advocate when he pleads mortal enmity on behalf of the accused; for in these cases it is very seldom that anyone bears witness without enmity, because witches are always hated by everybody." Torture was to be threatened, though not always

applied at once. Both before and after torture the judge was enjoined to promise the accused her life, but "she is not to be told that she is to be imprisoned; but should be led to suppose that some other penance, such as exile, will be imposed on her as punishment. . . . Others think that after she has been consigned to prison in this way, the promise to spare her life should be kept for a time, but that after a certain period she should be burned. A third opinion is that the Judge may safely promise the accused her life, but in such a way that he should afterwards disclaim the duty of passing sentence on her, deputing another Judge in his place." Further on the "Malleus Maleficarum" continues the instructions: "Let the Judge come in and promise that he will be merciful, with the mental reservation that he means he will be merciful to himself or to the State." At any time *agents provocateurs* might be introduced into the prison to entrap the accused into making admissions which could be used against her. No wonder that the Inquisition is still a name of horror! However black may have been the crimes of the accused, the perfidy of her judges was blacker still. It is not surprising that many so-called witches preferred to die rather than acknowledge a God whose professed priests were guilty of such abominable treachery.

These methods were in use two generations before the "Malleus Maleficarum" saw the light. When Joan of Arc was tried in 1431 before the Bishop of Beauvais and the Inquisitor, an *agent provocateur* (the priest Loyseleur) was sent by the bishop to her; the spy introduced himself as a sympathizing compatriot, hoping to induce her to utter some words which would compromise her; while in the next room, stationed beside a concealed opening into Joan's chamber, were two notaries recording the prisoner's words. The bishop threatened her with torture, then promised her her life and a slight penance if she would recant. She accepted, but as soon as she had performed her part of the bargain she found that the "slight penance" was to be perpetual imprisonment; and even that small amount of mercy was revoked almost as soon as promised, presumably there having been a mental reservation on the part of the bishop and inquisitor, and she was burned alive exactly a week after her recantation. Here there can be no question of political wire-pulling on the part of the English to compass her death, as is usually supposed; the trial follows the course prescribed for all ecclesiastical judges by the "Malleus Maleficarum."

Mr. Summers triumphantly points out that the "Malleus Maleficarum" received the official approbation of the "Faculty of Theology of the Honourable University of Cologne," and that it was the text-book for all inquisitors as to methods of trying witches in the greater part of Europe. He defends these methods on account of the "horrid craft, foul sorceries, and devilish commerce" of the witches, which justified, in his opinion, any means necessary to suppress them. He likens them to the modern Bolshevik, whom he holds in equal fear and horror. His defence runs thus: "It was against this that the Inquisition had to fight, and who can be surprised if, when faced with so vast a conspiracy, the methods of the Holy Office may not seem—if the terrible conditions are conveniently forgotten—a little drastic, a little severe?" In view of the quotations given above, Mr. Summers's use of the qualificatory "little" seems slightly inadequate! It would be interesting to know whether, as the Bolshevik is apparently a kind of witch, Mr. Summers would propose to apply "the thumb-screw and the rack for the glory of the Lord" to Mr. A. J. Cook.

Mr. Summers claims that the "Malleus Maleficarum" was an authoritative work of the Christian Church. It is perhaps worth while to compare the two great proselytizing religions of the Middle Ages with this opinion in view. The Mahomedan offered "Islam or the sword," a short shrift without torture, without perfidious promises; the Christian method is set forth in the "Malleus Maleficarum." Is it any wonder that Christianity failed where Islam succeeded? When Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics read the "Malleus Maleficarum," approved by a great Christian Church, and published as an important aspect of that Church by one of its priests, can we wonder if they say, "God deliver us from such a religion!"

As regards the actual translation of the book, Mr. Summers himself calls it "jejune and bare." Far be it from us to contradict him.

M. A. MURRAY.

### KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S EVOLUTION

The Letters of Katherine Mansfield. Edited by J. MIDDLETON MURRY. Two vols. (Constable, 15s.)

IN an age of haste which is frequently thought to have destroyed the art of letter-writing, Katherine Mansfield took her own way and poured forth a correspondence as voluminous as that of Shelley. It is not all contained in the present publication. Some appears to have been withheld by chance or difficulty, and what has been accessible to the editor has been subject to his aims, which, he tells us, are "to present as fully as possible all those of her letters which seemed to me to possess an intrinsic interest, and secondly to retain such portions of other letters as would explain the various situations of her life." Time will yet bring to light many passages of her correspondence; meanwhile, we have these two considerable volumes, and, if the reading of them enforces on us a sense of obtrusion and spiritual or domestic awkwardness, we have in them a fund of fragmentary beauties of expression and a self-portrait of one who will not soon be forgotten in her courage, her vivacity, and her grace.

Such was the rapidity of Katherine Mansfield's response to impacts of the moment that these letters contain many expressions of a contradictory appearance, by the varying selection of which various estimates of her personality will probably be formed. With all due allowance for these springings of her emotion this way and that, chiefly indicating her fineness and youngness of sensibility, it seems possible to derive from the profusion of her commentary a compact notion of her development. The earlier letters, broadly considered, are those of an inquiring spirit restricted by the training of a small group of persons with a limited range of human values. If we reflect, for instance, that many of these effusions of sensation and event belong to the years of the war, we shall be struck by the fact that they seldom refer to the vast and strange tumults, the numberless and particular home-thrusts of those times. And yet it would be ridiculous and intolerable to deduce that there was in Katherine Mansfield, who has left us some of the most sympathetic records of the distresses of others, any immanent want of feeling. The case was that she, in a stage of indeterminate outlook, was for the time shaped by the austerity and apathy of a type with which she was most in touch.

That configuration could not last. The doctrine that mankind with its bayonets was merely "a dull sight" died away at the end of the war, and she could write of "all that beautiful youth feeding the fields of France," and throw aside a novel of the week with "I don't like it. My private opinion is that it is a lie in the soul. The war never has been: that is what its message is. I don't want (God forbid!) mobilization and the violation of Belgium, but the novel can't just leave the war out. There *must* have been a change of heart." Besides this indication of Katherine Mansfield's journey away from temporary circumscriptions of a cold culture, one notices that her style in letters grows less like the slang of a group, and the practice of an intellectual authorship. The earlier part of the collection is, for instance, interspersed with French phrases and sentences, of which so acute a lover of English had no need; but these extravagances diminish as time goes on. Or again, as a reader she emerges from narrowness into cordiality. She is found in 1915 reporting on the Oxford Book of English Verse as "except for Shakespeare and Marvell and just a handful of others . . . a mass of falsity"; but later on she speaks with a charming note of personal friendship of Chaucer, or Cowley. "Shelley and Keats," she will say, "I get more and more *attached to*. Nay, to all 'poetry.' I have such a passion for it, and I feel such an understanding of it." Her revolt appears in so many words: she reads some letters and she exclaims, "They horrify me. Did one know all the wrong people?"

Moved by these reconsiderations, Katherine Mansfield in her later days wrote in a spirit of hopefulness and practical sympathy to fresh correspondents whose writings gave her pleasure. The recipients of her messages will remember the delicacy and the clear judgment which she now revealed



## Books for Christmas, 1928.

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without hindrance. In general, too, her power of doing good by stealth, and expressing the depth and simplicity of her affections, now matured. That uneasiness which the first volume of her letters causes us is absolved by the dignity and strength of the concluding series. Great is the vindication, tranquil the climax. We shall not presume to emphasize the tragic undertone of those final utterances. Katherine Mansfield knew a better way: "All this sounds much too serious and dramatic. As a matter of fact there is absolutely no tragedy in it; of course."

E. B.

## AUGUSTE COMTE

**Auguste Comte, Thinker and Lover.** By JANE M. STYLE. (Kegan Paul. 5s.)

COMTE, the philosopher, has grown a little dusty with age. The nineteenth-century iconoclasts, the terror of their time, turn out to have been so benevolent, of such moral integrity, that it is hard to see now why men grew disturbed and indignant. Comte, in his plan for a synthesis of all science, showed himself one of the last of the heroic and large-minded race of great men; but there was little piercing in his philosophy, and he does not seem to have carried well the world-size at which he aimed.

But Comte, the man, has his interest. Mrs. Style's biography of him is warmed by her hero-worship. It is mild and amiable in tone, a pleasing piece of work; and she has a clear eye for psychologically important facts. Her reading of Comte's character is not quite unbiased; but little is wrong with it except for her disproportions.

The mother of Auguste was a deeply devotional woman. She called her son after three great saints of the Catholic calendar, Isidore, Augustus, and Francis Xavier; and there is no doubt she wished him to become a religious leader, her own handiwork and justification. She put on him the whole weight of her ambitious love; and in his childhood the two lived in a most intimate emotional connection. When Comte was sent away to school at nine years old, his mother wrote to him: "Must we always be separated? What a painful existence!" and in later years Comte himself often regretted that he had been torn from his mother so early.

He was a small, delicate, and under-sized boy, but he was a prodigy for study. Once, when the mathematical master was away, he was set on a chair in front of the form to act in his stead. He was not without his moments of aggression. Already he had elaborated a hatred of Napoleon; by the time he was thirteen he had given up his faith; and finally he was expelled from school for having requested that a master who had shown disrespect to his pupils should resign his post.

His concentration upon knowledge was so great that on one occasion, before he was twenty, he retained his thought without distraction for eighty hours. His emotional life suffered severely. He looked for affection in the most casual and uncreative ways, paying regular visits to prostitutes. Plainly this was an unsatisfactory solution. After a further experimental stage he took a step which showed his entire lack of wisdom.

Caroline Massin, a young, bright, and intelligent woman, suggested to Comte that he should marry her and take her name off the register of vice. Comte, moved by a self-conscious benevolence, and hoping that in this way he had provided for himself without great obligation, accepted her suggestion. After a year of marriage he found himself in quite unmitigatable misery.

He was at the outset of a brilliant career. He had just delivered before an audience of savants and men of eminence the first lectures of a series of seventy-two in which he proposed to review the whole attainments of mankind in scientific knowledge. His wife suggested to him that they should receive an old lover of hers into their ménage. Comte's emotion was catastrophic. He rushed to a friend and told him the whole story; but even his confession could not relieve him of his torments. He was taken, by Caroline and her old lover, to a private asylum.

His mother proposed placing him in a religious house; but she was persuaded in the end that such circumstances

would aggravate his condition. After a few months he was pronounced incurable. With a more disinterested affection his mother next appealed to Caroline to take him back into their home. Their marriage had been a civil marriage, and now at his mother's prompting the benediction of the Church was pronounced over Caroline and the unconscious Comte. The secret of his mother's appeal was never revealed; he was left to imagine that everything had been done at Caroline's desire, and without doubt this helped him towards recovery.

But recovery did not help him to solve the problems of his marriage. For some years he attempted to make no demands on Caroline at all: in the end they separated. Later in life Comte conceived a romantic adoration for Clotilde de Vaux. Their love gave each of them support without interfering greatly with their private lives. When Clotilde died, Comte apotheosized her. He kept her memory always alive by daily meditation and found himself guarded against all irruptive temptations.

In this way he was able to apply himself to his work with a more genuine warmth of spirit. Where he had been previously theoretical in his love for humanity he now attempted to put his principles into action. For some years, for example, he had been dependent on the constant care of his housekeeper, Sophie; and suddenly it struck him that he had been forcing her to live apart from her husband and her child. He concerned himself more intimately with her, took husband and child to live with him, and discovered in her an ardent comrade and disciple.

There is no pretension in Mrs. Style's book. She writes, too, of Comte's philosophic and scientific work; and though she does not go deeply into technical problems she expounds his simpler tenets with insight and ease of style. Perhaps the most notable fact that declares itself in her biography is that Comte, throughout all his life, was typically a man without a *milieu*. His history is not interwoven with friendships or with movements. He seems to have set himself to solve social problems in aloofness and isolation.

ALAN PORTER.

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\* \* \*

*The rest is silence—and*

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**The Women at the Pump.** By KNUT HAMSDUN. Translated by ARTHUR G. CHATER. (Knopf. 10s. 6d.)

**The Captain's Daughter.** By ALEXANDER PUSHKIN. Translated by NATALIE DUDDINGTON. Introduction by EDWARD GARNETT. (Dent. 6s.)

**Mother and Son.** By ROMAIN ROLLAND. Translated by VAN WYCK BROOKS. (Thornton Butterworth. 7s. 6d.)

**Little Fadette.** By GEORGE SAND. Translated by HAMISH MILES. (Scholartis Press. 8s. 6d.)

THERE is very little excuse nowadays for not reading foreign books, since the stream of translations swells fuller than ever.

Scandinavian literature, for instance, which few can read in the original, is no longer remote and unattainable. Translations abound from the Swedish, the Norwegian, and the Danish. But either familiarity has bred contempt in us, or else these books are far below the original high standard. The first of them to be translated for us had an intrinsic worth behind the glamour of unfamiliarity; and Mr. Knut Hamsun's "Growth of the Soil" was perhaps the most remarkable of them. But his "Mysteries" was disappointing, and "The Women at the Pump" is almost intolerably boring. Prosy philosophizing is really no more interesting for being spoken by the doctor and postmaster of a small Norwegian town; and the question of who sleeps with whom is even duller there than in the studios of Chelsea. The book is very long; but as it is written at a dead level, without any emphasis, and as the plot is revealed by a series of elusive hints, it is impossible to skip so much as a paragraph. It is, moreover, written (or at least, translated) in a chatty style that is quite maddening.

It is refreshing to turn from this glut of commonplaces to "The Captain's Daughter," written by Pushkin nearly a hundred years ago, and now made available in Mrs. Duddington's charming translation. Mr. Edward Garnett tells us in his introduction that Pushkin took from Scott the idea of writing an historical novel, but his treatment of it is very different. There are few descriptions, and none that are not absolutely necessary; and the plot, though arbitrary and artificial, moves rapidly through battles, murders, and brutal deaths. Although the hero, heroine, and villain are all mere types, there are some delicious minor characters, such as the Captain's managing wife, who runs the whole fortress and its garrison, and is put to death by Tartar hordes. This highly coloured little book could be amplified into a first-rate film.

"Mother and Son," the last volume of M. Romain Rolland's trilogy about Annette Rivière, is an ambitious book. It takes (roughly speaking) love, hate, and the Great War as its subjects, and treats them in the grand manner. M. Rolland feels passionately on these matters, and his passion drags us willy-nilly into the slough, to wallow with him. When the War (and the book) begins, Annette's illegitimate son is fourteen, and threatens to become one of those precocious, vicious, schoolboy prigs with whom M. André Gide has made us only too familiar. His relations with his mother become intolerable, and she seeks another outlet for her love. She contrives a reunion between a dying officer and his German friend, and indulges in an orgy of self-sacrifice which leaves her empty and exhausted. But meanwhile, wholesome neglect has brought her son to his senses, and they fall into each other's arms. M. Rolland's personality is never quite obliterated by the immensity of his conception; and in spite of its sentimentality, this book is valuable for compelling us to face the reality of war again.

It is difficult to believe that the author of "Little Fadette" was as stormy and romantic, in her own way, as M. Rolland; for her pictures of peasant life and character are painted with Quakerish restraint of line and tone. The twin brothers, and the ragged but saintly imp of a heroine, are genuinely rural, without being rustic, and their relations to one another are psychologically right. We are glad to see that Mr. Hamish Miles is going to follow up his excellent piece of work with translations of George Sand's other novels.

## THE HOUSE OF LIFE

**Recollections of Rossetti.** By HALL CAINE. (Cassell. 5s.)

**The House of Life.** By DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by PAUL FRANKLIN BAUM. (Humphrey Milford. 14s.)

SIR HALL CAINE does not tell much that is not already known about Rossetti. He could, he says, if he chose; but that is more interesting for the student of Sir Hall than the student of Rossetti. It would have shown greater regard for the reader's nerves, which a merciful writer is always bound to consider, if Sir Hall had simply divulged what he intended to divulge, and been silent about the rest. No one enjoys being baffled, but in this book one is baffled twice over: once by the author's hints at secrets, and a second time by his insistence that Rossetti was a good simple fellow, whom one cannot imagine having secrets.

There is one interesting piece of information in the book. On the dreadful train journey from Cumberland Rossetti confessed to the author "that on the night of his wife's death, when he returned to her room from his walk, he found a letter or message addressed to himself lying on the table by her side. I think he said he had not shown that letter to anyone, and that he had never mentioned it before. Of this last fact I cannot be certain, but I am sure that he said that the message had left such a scar on his heart as would never be healed." Rossetti's further words the author cannot recall, "except in broken fragments"; but the poet seems to have reproached himself with having caused his wife's death through failure of affection, and with having violated her grave later to recover the manuscript of his poems. Sir Hall does not disclose what was the tenor of Mrs. Rossetti's letter; perhaps—the matter is not clear—he does not know. It would be both cruel and unprofitable to speculate on the subject; and though the letter is probably the key to many of the mysteries of Rossetti's later life, it must be left in its present half-obscure.

Mr. Baum's commentary on "The House of Life" is painstaking and acute, if somewhat uncritically appreciative. He says justly that "Even more than is usually true of any artist, Rossetti's genius is peculiar"; if one does not accept a whole system of idiosyncracies one gets very little out of him. But whether Rossetti's "specialness" should by critical standards be accepted, whether it was not largely a failure rather than a triumph of expression, Mr. Baum does not consider seriously enough. He has doubts. He quotes Rossetti's famous dictum: "Conception, *fundamental brainwork*, that is what makes the difference in art. Work your metal as much as you like, but first take care that it is gold and worth working." Mr. Baum remarks: "Perhaps Rossetti's greatest fault is that he works his metal too much, and is too easily satisfied that the metal is gold." His straining for brevity, indeed, often overreached itself, and falling short of the content, gives an impression of confused verbosity. Frequently he was merely verbose:—

"Have you not noted, in some family  
Where two were born of the first marriage-bed,  
How still they own their gracious bond, though fed  
And nursed on the forgotten breast and knee?"

The best of the sonnets are the simplest. The symbolism is stuffily didactic; it has more resemblance to the symbolism of Watts's "Hope" than to Dante. The framework of the sequence is banal, and only here and there a simple sonnet expressing regret or passion shows the writer to be a true poet. The vocabulary becomes most precious in the symbolical sonnets. When one of these begins:—

"Sweet twining hedgeflowers wind-stirred in no wise,"  
we can tell that the symbol will follow in the sextet, but it is usually heralded by "even as."

"Even as a child, of sorrow that we give  
The dead, but little in his heart can find."

he begins one, giving at the same time an example of his uneasily self-conscious inversion. He becomes so fond of "even" that he sticks it in everywhere:—

"One flame-winged brought a white-winged harp-player  
Even where my lady and I lay all alone."

The "evens," the "in no wises," the "all alones" mark vacancies in his thought, but sometimes the fundamental brainwork seems to be quite absent. Once he begins:—



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"Sometimes I fain would find in thee some fault," which is the very luxury of make-believe. At his worst he was not surpassed by the most self-deceived versemaker. He had not a touch of the intellectual intensity of a genuine symbolical poet. His symbolism was partly a mere expression of the larger hope, and partly another kind of make-believe peculiar to himself, a dim religious cushion under which he smothered his genuine feelings, which escaped, however, in some of his simpler poems. It is perhaps this that Mr. Baum means when he says that "he unconsciously substitutes tenseness for intensity, the *faux bon* for the  *vraie vérité*"; but it is astonishing to read after this that the substitution "is not an altogether damning fault." "We must be extraordinarily careful," Mr. Baum continues, "lest we forget that his best work, that by which any poet is to be finally judged, rises clearly above his weaknesses." This is true, but how very small the bulk of that work is.

EDWIN MUIR.

### WRITING ALOUD

**Writing Aloud.** By J. D. BERESFORD. (Collins. 6s.)

EXCEPTING the theatre, there is nothing so enthralling to the layman as the life and behaviour of an artist or a writer. It is pleasant to imagine these unusual creatures engaged in the mysterious act of creation, existing in a world of their own, out of the flux of affairs that fill the lives of bishops, statesmen, and masters of industry. Mr. Beresford, a successful novelist, has written a book in which he describes how the idea of a novel developed in his mind over a period of several years, and how he lived during that time. He lifts the veil, and reveals—what? "A middle-aged novelist, at various times and places," living a perfectly normal family life, with tea-parties and occasional outings, compelled to interrupt important work in order to entertain old ladies, or to write pot-boilers for American magazines. This side of the picture is disappointing, and unnecessary because uninteresting. The other side, whatever its merits, is interesting as an attempt at self-analysis. How far it can be said to be worth recording in print is open to question; whether in fact it would not have been better to have written the novel (and afterwards, perhaps to have described how it came to be written) than to have indicated only how it might have been written. For as Mr. Forster has said: "The novelist who betrays too much interest in his method can never be more than interesting." It is true that M. Gide has published an account of the making of "*Les Faux Monnayeurs*," but then the novel had already been written, whereas Mr. Beresford has not yet written his, nor, it seems, ever intends to. For this reason one cannot help thinking that by saving himself the labour—a very considerable labour, as he himself admits—of writing the novel, he has hit upon a new form of pot-boiler.

Undoubtedly he has enjoyed a 'busman's holiday, but whether his readers will enjoy his account of it, is another matter. The story he has suggested to himself is of the simplest kind: The illegitimate daughter of a housemaid is discovered by her mother's employers, and brought up by them. A brilliant young man enters into her life, and she is on the brink of falling in love with him, when she witnesses a scene between her supposed father and a demi-mondaine. Horrified by the physical side of love, she turns to religion for consolation. Unexpectedly the housemaid, now the titled wife of a war-profiteer, turns up and discloses everything. After the inevitable scene, the young man saves the situation by marrying her daughter in spite of her origin. Such a plot is easy to construct, and easily put into words. The difficulty, of course, is to introduce the characters into the plot, and then to develop it through their thoughts and actions. That is the novelist's task which Mr. Beresford has shirked. His analysis of the chief character (the girl) is composed of discursive comments, made in bed and elsewhere, on sex-repression, and the spiritual education of *jeunes filles en fleur*. These digressions do not make a novel, nor do they show how a novel is made, but they do throw light on Mr. Beresford's methods, so that considered as an essay in autobiography, "*Writing Aloud*" is worth reading by anyone acquainted with the novels that Mr. Beresford really has written.

### GARDENS

**A History of Garden Art.** By MARIE LUISE GOTHEIN. Edited by WALTER P. WRIGHT. Translated by LAURA ARCHER-HIND. (Dent. 84s.)

**The Unconventional Garden.** By SIR ARTHUR HORT. (Arnold. 10s. 6d.)

THE first of these books is a really magnificent work. It will fascinate every garden lover. Here is an extraordinarily complete history of the art of gardening from the times of Ancient Egypt to our own day. The author's learning is amazing, but it is not learning run mad or to seed, it is directed by intelligence and has been used to produce a work which has more than a specialist interest, for it is contribution to the history of taste and art. The subject of gardens is treated historically. The first four chapters deal with Egypt, Western Asia, Greece, and Rome; then there is a chapter on Byzantine and Islamic gardens; there follow eight chapters on European gardens from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century, a chapter on the gardens of China and Japan, and chapters on English landscape gardening and on the garden art of the nineteenth century. Mr. Wright has added a chapter on modern English gardening and on American garden art. The evolution of the various modern types of garden, Continental and English, from the time of the Renaissance is extremely interesting, and the reader will find the evolution traced in great detail in these volumes. From the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, Europe was dominated by that garden art which originated in Italy and culminated in the France of Louis XIV., an art which looked upon the garden as material for formal, panoramic, and architectural splendour on a vast scale. In this view, the garden was not a place to grow flowers in, nor, except in England, a place to walk in—it was a great spectacle. The eighteenth century, romanticism, the landscape gardening of Kent and Brown revolutionized the theory and technique of the art, and led, through the geraniums and calceolarias of Victorian flower-beds, to the horticultural splendours of the modern garden. All this may be read in Frau Gothein's book, which is illustrated with an immense number of drawings, plans, and photographs.

Sir Arthur Hort's book is a characteristic product of the modern art. It regards the garden as primarily a place in which to grow flowers, and encourages the reader by telling him what a large variety of beautiful flowers, besides geraniums, calceolarias, and roses, he can grow successfully in a small garden. It is a useful book.

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encroachment of Barbarism upon Romanism during the two centuries under review is," as Professor Hearnshaw points out, "in the highest degree impressive and convincing," and a further warning against cataclysmic interpretations of history. His estimate, too, of the real importance of invasions such as those of the Huns and Vandals, whose empires were only temporary and short-lived, is exceedingly illuminating. The book (the last, alas, which we shall have from a great scholar) ought to be in every college library, and everyone interested in one of the great eras of transition in the world's history will wish to possess it.

## ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

HERE are some excellent anthologies just published: "The Minde's Delight, A Fanciful Anthology," by Hedley Hope-Nicholson, with a Proem by R. B. Cunningham-Graham (Cayne Press, 10s. 6d.), a very well printed and well bound volume; "A Poetry Book from Spenser to Bridges," compiled by A. Watson Bain (Cambridge Press, 3s. 6d.), intended primarily for boys and girls from fourteen upwards; "Apes and Parrots," an anthology of parodies compiled by J. C. Squire (Jenkins, 6s.).

Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton publish a volume, impressive in bulk, "The Plays of J. M. Barrie" (21s.).

The following are biographical or autobiographical: "Many Tales of Many Cities," by Isidore de Lara (Hutchinson, 18s.); "Anthony Comstock," by Heywood Brown and Margaret Leech (Wishart, 15s.); "Memoir of Lord Pentland," by Lady Pentland (Methuen, 10s. 6d.); "The Book of Famous Queens," by L. H. Farmer (Harrap, 8s. 6d.), which begins with Semiramis and ends with the Empress Dowager of China.

An interesting reprint is Eden's "State of the Poor," abridged and edited by A. G. L. Rogers (Routledge, 15s.).

"The Way of Peace," by Viscount Cecil (Allan, 12s. 6d.), contains Viscount Cecil's essays and addresses, principally on internationalism, the League, and disarmament.

A new volume in Hutchinson's Library of Sports and Pastimes is "Skis and Ski-ing," by Elon Jessup (Hutchinson, 4s. 6d.).

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**The Golden Roof.** By MARJORIE BOWEN. (Hodder & Stoughton, 7s. 6d.)

Miss Bowen's aim, in this as in some of her earlier romances, is less to write an adventure story against an historical background than to make out of the material of history itself a narrative and a series of pictures to illustrate the events and the leading characters of a certain period. For the present book, she has chosen the period (1493-1519) of the rule of Maximilian I. of Hapsburg, crowned King of the Romans and Emperor Elect of the Holy Roman Empire. Apparently, this personage has received little notice in England, and none in English fiction, but Miss Bowen sees him as an attractive and significant figure, standing between the Renaissance and the Reformation, and she has made a fairly readable study of him, touched up with the rich tints laid on sombre colour so dear to the historical romancer. "The Golden Roof," formed of gilded tiles, on the Imperial Palace at Innsbruck, still bears witness to the glory of her hero.

**Black Rent.** By HAROLD BEGBIE. (Mills & Boon, 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Begbie, in this rather startling novel, writes about the war. Rashton is a surgeon, a sensitive soul, a lover of Bach; his wife is inclined to be hard and unimaginative; his son, Christopher, is an aesthete. Their immediate circle is completed by Philip Lee, of the American Embassy, in love with Karin, a beautiful American girl staying with them, and Lindford, a violent patriot. The war comes. Rashton serves with the R.A.M.C., and Christopher volunteers, against his principles, because he is afraid to face the imputation of cowardice at home. Lindford dies, with his hopes centred in a league of nations. Rashton suffers the loss of his son, shot for cowardice, of his wife, murdered by a servant, of his honour, through an affair with a hospital matron. But finally, he is reclaimed by Karin and Philip. The story is interesting and well written.

**Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1915.** By BRIGADIER-GENERAL SIR JAMES E. EDMONDS. (Macmillan, 12s. 6d.)

The praise given to previous volumes of the Official War History is deserved by this, the fourth, in all respects of investigation, candour, and good writing. Again we welcome the critical dexterity of General Edmonds as a tabulator of masses of documents, and the historical gift which impels him to vary the dry facts of policy and organization with battle landscape and individual experience should make his name known among "all ranks." It is not his fault that this volume, of which the Battle of Loos is the main matter, leaves behind it so bleak a wilderness of thought. Nothing more cruel can well be imagined than the succession of minor attacks made by the British against an intact system of barbed wire, redoubts, machine-guns, and artillery, controlled by rational commanders, in 1915. Nothing could have been more terribly useless. General Edmonds indicates how the demands, and practically the commands, of the French leaders affected our leaders, and made them throw their men into such massacres as Loos against their judgment; but there is no comfort in that.

## NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### H.M.V. RECORDS

THE best production of the H.M.V. this month is a beautiful orchestral record, Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, played by the Vienna Philharmonic Society, conducted by Herr Schalk (Three 12-in. records, D1481-3, 6s. 6d. each). The playing reflects the highest credit on orchestra and conductor; the recording is for the most part excellent, the only fault being an occasional harshness or shrillness. Another good orchestral record is Berlioz's famous March from "The Damnation of Faust" and the Tannhäuser March, played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Dr. Blech (D1498, 6s. 6d.). This is the orchestra which we have recently heard with so much pleasure in London, conducted by Dr. Furtwängler. In this record it is very good in the Tannhäuser March, but somehow or other the Berlioz March is disappointing and we have heard better performances and better records of it. Mr. Goossens's New Light Symphony Orchestra played Granados's Spanish Dances, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, and Albeniz's Triana arranged for the orchestra (Two 12-in. records, C1544-5, 4s. 6d.). The dances are a little dull, but the other piece, written, of course, for the piano, is pleasant.

We have drawn attention in these columns to the fact that Schumann is rarely recorded. This month H.M.V. issue the Pianoforte Quintette in E flat, Op. 44, played by the Fonzaley Quartet and Ossip Gabrilowitsch (Four 12-in. records, DB1191-4, 8s. 6d. each). Though few people to-day would agree with the ecstatic praise given to the work at the time when it was first performed, and for many years afterwards, it still retains considerable beauty and interest. These records are, we presume, a re-recording by electric process, for the H.M.V. produced the Quintette played by the same performers several years ago.

Frida Leider, soprano, has attempted a difficult task in singing the famous and difficult Leonora aria from Beethoven's "Fidelio" (D1497, 6s. 6d.), and though, as was to be expected, the record is not perfection, she has produced a beautiful record.



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## STREET OFFENCES INQUIRY REPORT POSTPONEMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene regrets that, owing to the unexpected delay in publication of the above Report, the meeting arranged for **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26th,** in the **CAXTON HALL,** at 8 p.m., is temporarily postponed.

## NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

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All communications should be addressed to the Subscription Department.

## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## THE COMING CONVERSION—FIRST CO-OPERATIVE—SHELL UNION—B.C. POWER

**T**HERE is talk of the Treasury making its conversion offer this week-end to the holders of the 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. National War Bonds and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Treasury Bonds due February 1st, 1929, and the  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Treasury Bonds due April 1st, 1929. According to the official list of the Stock Exchange the amounts outstanding of these issues make a total of £208,480,636. The stage seems set for a new conversion issue not only because the industrial share market is not attracting undue attention, but because on December 1st some £50,000,000 are distributed in the half-yearly interest on 5 per cent. War Loan. As the bonds to be redeemed are short-dated, it is possible that another issue of 5 per cent. Treasury Bonds, 1933-35, will be made, carrying the option to convert into 4 per cent. Consols. The existing 5 per cent. Treasury Bonds, 1933-35, have the right to convert into 4 per cent. Consols on February 1st, 1929, at  $114\frac{1}{2}$  Consols per £100 Treasury Bond. The present price of Consols 4 per cent. is  $88\frac{1}{2}$ , and unless the price rises to about  $89\frac{1}{2}$  there is nothing in the conversion. It is, of course, within the power of the Treasury to "make" 4 per cent. Consols better. Another suggestion is that the conversion offer will take the form of a 4 per cent. or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. short-dated security—5 per cent. not being too popular on account of the heavy tax payable.

On a former occasion (THE NATION of September 22nd) we felt compelled to criticize the accounts and dividend policy of the First Co-operative Investment Trust. The Trust, we said, had set itself an impossible task by paying out dividends to its shareholders from its start four years ago at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum. With the general level of interest rates falling it could not hope to continue to pay 7 per cent. dividends and at the same time build up adequate investment reserves and so provide its shareholders with the security expected of an investment trust company. We are glad to see that Mr. Emil Davies has at last come round to this way of thinking. In the recent issue of the Trust's journal, he writes: "If the rate of interest that can be earned on good investments goes steadily down, our critics may prove to be right to the extent that we may deem it advisable to reduce our dividends to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or even the 6 per cent. that some people appear to think an adequate rate." . . . "In future we propose to pay in respect of the first half of each financial year an interim dividend of 3 per cent. in place of the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. paid hitherto, and if, as we hope, the results for the full year justify it, pay 4 per cent. for the second half year."

It is a pity that Mr. Emil Davies did not act on friendly and disinterested advice a little sooner. The report of the First Co-operative Investment Trust for the half-year ended July 31st, 1928, showed that the profits of £49,536 (without deduction of tax) fell short by £721 of the amounts required to pay the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interim dividend (£45,291), the reserve for proportion of dividend on the preference shares (£397), and directors' remuneration for the half-year (£4,569). Moreover, the valuation of the investments—even taking middle market prices—showed a depreciation on the book value of £34,211, against which there is the uninspiring investment reserve of £35,000. The share capital now consists of £1,352,689 16s. in 2s. shares, and £56,030 in withdrawable preference shares. The dividend equalization reserve is only £6,500, and entrance fee reserve £32,101. We sincerely hope that whether or no the First Co-operative Investment will be able to earn in future 7 per cent. on its ordinary share capital, it will refrain from dis-

tributing its earnings up to the hilt and will instead build up its reserves in the orthodox manner of investment trust companies.

In discussing oil shares in THE NATION of November 10th, we recommended Shell Union shares before the quarterly accounts were published or the issue of new shares was announced. The shares have now risen to  $39\frac{1}{4}$  cum bonus of three new shares at \$10 for every ten shares held. This price is equivalent to  $\$32\frac{1}{2}$  ex bonus, and if the same rate of dividends of \$1.40 per share per annum were maintained the yield would be 4.3 per cent. The accounts for the nine months ending September 30th certainly show remarkable progress, profits being increased by 35 per cent. over those of the corresponding period of 1927. If earnings for the last quarter of the year are maintained at this rate, the old ordinary shares should earn \$2.05 per share for 1928. These earnings would be equivalent to \$1.58 per share on the increased capital. It is therefore unwise to expect any increase in Shell Union dividends above \$1.40 per share per annum. The implication of this argument is that the shares seem high enough at the present time.

We generally end this page with the diffident recommendation of some particular investment. The story of what happened to Massey-Harris common shares since we referred to them last week is, however, somewhat unnerving. When we corrected the proof the price was \$73 against \$66 when we penned the paragraph. By the time THE NATION appeared in print the price was \$90. As we write this week it is \$100. Unless some amalgamation comes off, such a price cannot be justified; it is the result of the gambling fever which has taken hold of the market. In calling attention now to British Columbia Power common shares it is not suggested that they will go the sky-rocketing way of Massey-Harris. British Columbia Power Corporation was formed when Lord Rothermere and Sir Herbert Holt combined their offers to acquire the outstanding preferred ordinary and deferred ordinary stocks of British Columbia Electric Railway, an old-established company which is operating electric railways and bus services, and supplying electricity and gas in Vancouver and other important towns in British Columbia. The following table shows the progress of the British Columbia Electric Railway in the last two years:—

Year ended	Electricity kwh gen.	Gas sold (1000 c.ft.)	No. of customers	Passengers
June 30.			Electricity.	Gas.
1926	387,141,000	833,169	89,270	33,158
1927	407,180,000	977,902	94,611	36,484
				Carried.
				72,547,000
				73,113,000

The British Columbia Power is now one of the largest hydro electric power producers in Canada, and its recent earnings have shown a 12 per cent. increase over those of 1927.

The share capital of British Columbia Power consists of 1,000,000 "A" shares and 1,000,000 "B" shares of no par value. The "A" shares are entitled to a non-cumulative dividend of \$2 per share per annum in priority to the "B" shares, after which both rank equally, but the maximum dividend payable on the "A" shares is \$5 per share per annum. The "A" shares were issued in June carrying a bonus of one-quarter of a "B" share, and to-day are  $\$58\frac{1}{2}$  ex bonus. If Colombia Power "A" shares are entitled eventually to stand on approximately the same dividend yield basis as Montreal Light, Heat and Power or Shawinigan Water and Power they should enjoy a gradual rise to about 80. Shawinigan common shares, which earned \$2.4 and received \$2 dividends last year, are quoted at 85 to yield 2.35 per cent., while Montreal common shares have risen to  $102\frac{1}{2}$ . In the case of Montreal the quarterly dividend rate has been raised to 60 cents, which would allow practically the same yield as Shawinigan.



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